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LITERATURE.

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**INTRODUCTION**

TO A COURSE OF

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To H. Lieber from his friend  
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AN

## INTRODUCTION<sup>†</sup>

TO A COURSE OF

# GERMAN LITERATURE;

IX

## LECTURES

TO THE

STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,

BY

LUDWIG VON MÜHLENFELS, LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THE GERMAN AND NORTHERN  
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1830

Soll ich dir die Gegend zeigen,  
Mußt du erst das Dach besiegen.

GOETHE.

PT 107  
M 77

## PREFACE.

THE following Introductory Lectures are submitted to the test of public judgment in that unaltered form in which they were delivered last session at the University of London, in order to enable the public to appreciate the spirit in which the lecturer, when opening his Course of Lectures on German Literature for the present session, is likely to treat his subject, and the views from which he proceeds in contemplating an important branch of the literary history of Germany.

Although this Introduction does not claim the merit of exclusive novelty in historical views, and in those notions on matters of taste, which sometimes are termed "aesthetical," nor that of a perfect and adequate develop-

ment of ideas ; yet the Author hopes that his exertions for correctness in his conceptions and statements, and for perspicuity in the mode of expressing them, will meet with a favourable reception and an indulgent criticism on the part of the public ; and he trusts that, at all events, the difficulty under which he labours in conveying his ideas in a language, which is not his vernacular tongue, will be taken into account on his behalf.

An Introduction of this kind ought not to be viewed in any other light than in that of a slight sketch, since it merely purports to convey the outlines of a general survey and cursory view of that ground, where the point is to be chosen from which the Lecturer intends to start. General results, of course, have been broached, while the details of investigation leading to such results remain untouched.

*University of London,*  
*January 1, 1830.*

## INTRODUCTION,

&c.

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GENTLEMEN,

THE term "German Literature" is so very vague and indefinite, that you may reasonably require of me some explanation, as to the sense in which I use it.

It would appear to be somewhat difficult to define strictly the signification of the word *literature*, since almost every writer on the subject extends, or confines, the limits of this signification. But we may, perhaps, come to a clearer idea thereof, by considering literature, firstly, in a *wider*, and secondly, in a more *confined* sense. In the former, it represents all those productions of the human mind, which are the work of reason and intellect, of fancy and feeling; and, in this sense, it comprehends the wide field of the sciences, and that of poetry, and constitutes the principal superstructure of the national mind.

In its latter, or more *confined* sense, literature seems not to comprise the sciences. Thus, jurisprudence, theology, medicine, philology, mathematics, and those branches of science comprehended under

the general denomination of natural philosophy—in a word, all sciences which are taught and studied according to certain systematic rules, and especially occupy the *intellect*, are excluded from literature. In this, its confined sense, literature seems to comprise, on the one hand, history, speculative philosophy, and rhetorick, constituting the prose style; and, on the other hand, poetry,—because, in these branches of literature, the intuitive power of the human mind, and the activity of the fancy, are the prevailing elements.

The lectures which I shall have the honour of delivering to you on German literature will treat of only a branch of that literature, in the more confined sense, as just described. I must restrict myself to reviews of the leading authors in poetry. These reviews will be chronologically arranged, beginning with the sixteenth century, and will, thus, form a prominent portion of a history of German literature, as proposed by me in the second statement of the council of this University.

Such a course appears to me to be the best calculated to afford an acquaintance with this branch of German literature, since literature must be considered an essential part of history. The *literature* of a people is the great repository of their ideas, and contains the leading features of the national mind. Without it, the *history* of a people cannot be understood; that is, if we consider history as something more than an enumeration of battles lost and gained,

or an account of the growth and decrease of different dynasties. On the other hand, the *literature* of a people, the bloom of the national mind, cannot be duly judged and estimated, without tracing its course as the product of the historical development of mankind generally, and in particular, of that of the nation to which it belongs. You will not then, I trust, charge me with any uncalled-for prolixity, if I endeavour, by some general preparatory remarks, to point out the relation of German literature to the development of the human mind, as represented in history; and how that memorable event, the Reformation, gave, as it were, a new direction to the cultivation of the German people.

This introduction will contain a sort of explanation of my historical and critical creed, and will furnish you with a key to those views, which will be laid before you in the course of my lectures, and which, without such previous explanation, might possibly appear paradoxical, and sometimes even unintelligible.

The thought of considering the history of mankind as the biography of an individual is not new; and Jean Paul Richter tells us, that the youth of a people is no metaphor, but a truth; a people only repeating, in larger proportions of time, and surrounding objects, the history of the individual. A modern German author, Adolph Müller, has expounded this view more fully; and thus, I have no reason to suppose that my opinions on the subject can be considered untenable, as I am only following

## 4 INTRODUCTION TO A COURSE OF

in the path which this author has trod before me, and coinciding in general with his views.

The individual man belongs to his family as to his nearest sphere ; the union of families belonging to one race, forms what is called a people ; and the entire social union of nations, as represented by the consideration of the past, present and future, is comprehended under the denomination of mankind—as an *organic whole* ; and, like other organic products, subject to certain laws and influences of time. Thus, for instance, we see a forest, as a mass of single trees, subjected to the same changes and influences to which the single tree is exposed ; and, as a grain of sand is a miniature representation of the earth, so man is the representative of mankind. The *end* of the existence of the individual man, is also the acknowledged aim of mankind generally—which is *perfection*, according to the model of the Eternal Spirit, who, hovering above the waters, called by love his creation into life. In order that mankind may reach this aim, we see, as history shows, that Providence takes upon itself the difficult charge of instructor. In one instance, we view it as the kind and careful parent, smiling above the cradled babe ; in another, as the severe admonisher, enforcing obedience from the unyielding child ; and, again, as the affectionate father receiving the lost son, and embracing him with redoubled love. The indestructible tendency to perfection in the human mind, even in the negligent, whether it express itself in piety, or in the never stifled voice of

conscience, is an evidence of our divine nature; and this tendency, acknowledged in the history of mankind, consecrates it as a noble and exalted science, for the truly philosophical inquirer.

"But," it may be asked, "if mankind, under the guidance of Providence, contend for so high an object, why then do the separate *peoples*, which collectively constitute mankind, perish and disappear from the field of history, without having approached this lofty aim?" This question may be very properly answered by another, namely—why are so many men found, heedless of the voice of conscience and forgetful of their high vocation, who, crippled in mind and body, meet an early death, without having attained the due degree of perfection? Gentlemen, all are called, but not all follow the calling: yet as, notwithstanding the immorality of many individuals, a nation may aspire to perfection, so, despite of the depravity of many nations, mankind is still striving onward for the noble end proposed to it by Providence.

Peoples and states flourish and fade, spring up and vanish,—but mankind belongs to an eternal history, and its existence is undisturbed by the perishing of single members, from which succeeding ones arise. It has its great periods, when its spirit obtains, as it were, a new impulse in order to effect its regeneration. If even those infantine dreams (reminiscences from an antehistorical time), the mythology and tales of almost every people, possessing

a history and a literature, point to a first blessed awakening from the embracement of creation, reason itself must deduce the necessity of such an antehistorical life from the analogy of the individual *human* life. Only divine wisdom can spring forth in armour, and prepared—earthly cultivation must be cradled and nursed.

If we trace the history of mankind to its earliest dawn, where it disengages itself from mythology; if we inquire into the historical documents of each separate people, which by language and literature has transmitted its records to posterity, we find mythology and tales to be the dark commencement of all history, with which, indeed, they are so interwoven, that the criticism of modern commentators was requisite, in order properly to distinguish between mythology and actual history. Witness the Roman, Jewish, and Northern histories, where this process has been successfully pursued by such eminent scholars as Niebuhr, De Wette, Gesenius, and Geijer. With the tales or songs alluded to, the literature of a nation is every where closely connected,—they are the dawn of the approaching day; for, before a nation has a history it possesses a poetry, and the first lispings of poetry are songs.

Considering, thus, the history of mankind as the biography of an individual, three great periods occur to us; namely, the early ages, including childhood and boyhood; the middle ages, comprising youth; and modern times, forming the perfect manhood.

But, in each of these several periods, we find nations which appear the particular representatives of its character ; yet so that, in the history of such separate peoples, all the epochs of human life, down to extreme old age, are nevertheless distinctly traceable.

Now the east, as it seems to be the cradle of mankind, so also in its nations shows the marks of childhood ; and, first, in the calm, contemplative Hindoos. For several thousand years this people has possessed a poetry, and considerable cultivation, but has remained, as it were, in a petrified childhood. A child loves most to play with flowers, and thus the poetry of the Hindoos is throughout the poetry of nature, the life of nature being the centre, to which all the thoughts of the Hindoos are turned. A perusal of the *Sacontala* will be sufficient to convince any one of the truth of this assertion. The images of the Hindoos are by no means devoid of grandeur ; nay, they often border on the gigantic and astounding,—but, still, they are the creations of an infantine fancy, unrestrained by the precepts of moderation and harmony. Thus we find them in their science, literature, and art. But what renders the Hindoo history so charming, is the calmness, peace, and truly child-like innocence, which overspreads the character of the people. This nation may be likened to a smiling babe, with arms extended towards its mother Nature, and finding no delight, save in its own fanciful dreams. If it be true, as it is probable, that the Egyptian and Greek wisdom flowed from Indian

sources, our view will be thereby still further confirmed, for the Deity most easily manifests itself to the pure and infantine mind.

Though the Egyptians appear to have advanced a step beyond the Hindoos, yet their history, as far as we know it, also bears the mark of childhood. Here, however, intellect has burst its fetters: contemplation is no longer confined to the fields of fancy, but thought gains a new life in Egyptian history; the calm and musing character, which delights in the mere *contemplation* of nature, having risen to a higher reflection. The Egyptian wants a medium, by which he may approach the Deity; and to satisfy this want, he endeavours to draw the Deity down to himself,—he allegorizes it. In social life, Egyptian history presents great bustle and activity. Commerce and science, agriculture and industry, are all in a progressive state; and, though the institution of *castes* be preserved, still it has a practical signification, whereas among the Hindoos it served only for religious purposes. The buildings, monuments, &c. of the Egyptians, are as gigantic as those of the Hindoos, but they have a more distinct form and a more defined utility. The Egyptian priests are not devoted to the merely calm and passive contemplation of the Deity, as the Brahmins, who despise all wisdom, save the religious; but they strive for the acquirement of human knowledge and science. To them, the stars are not only the eyes of God, but useful guides, whose course they calculate for human

purposes, and in whom they behold the rulers of human destiny. In their forms of art, if we may so term their allegorical representations of various deities, emblematical either of the powers of nature or of the influence of the Deity itself, we often remark the distorted workings of fancy, observable in a grown child, who is delighted by animal forms.

In Israel, the long standing guest of the Egyptians, the rude and stubborn boy occurs to us. A great capability and tendency to reflection is evident in this people; and *conscience*, or the discernment between right and wrong, is in a great degree awakened among them. With the two just mentioned nations, this *conscience* was comparatively dormant, because they had not to struggle with life so harshly as Israel. Not only is the moral law indelibly impressed on the minds of the Jews, but we find them striving to form their social life according to it: yet the sensuality of the boy always oversounds the voice which is heard, as well from the depths of his own heart, as from the summits of Sinai; and vainly for him were the commandments of the Decade engraven on stone. It is an undeniable fact, that the Jewish people became, in the hands of Providence, the means of sustaining that pure and genuine creed of a single and omnipotent God, which had been gradually lost in the other nations of the earth amidst the increase of immorality. But, it is equally certain, that they soon fashioned their God after their own idea. In their rude stubbornness, their pride and profound contempt for other nations,

the Jews wanted a national god, and they formed one for themselves. The hierarchy of the Levites was gradually confirmed by laws, emanating from sacerdotal influence; and the Almighty Jehovah, strong, powerful, and severe in his punishments, seemed in the eyes of the priests a necessary authority, in order to bridle the stubborn and selfish people. I may here allude to the fact (as forming a characteristic feature of the boyhood of mankind), that all those nations of antiquity, which are mentioned in history, were distinguished by their disregard, or rather contempt for other nations. A child cannot estimate the worth of others. Reflection never leads it from self-appreciation; but, in consequence of the predominance of its sensual nature, it seeks for the exclusive possession of enjoyments, praises its received and self-acquired advantages, and longs for those appertaining to others. With the exception of the Romans, this egotism is more perceptible in the Jews than in any other people. They regarded the Pagans as the rejected children of Jehovah; and it is remarkable how similar national feeling and mythology are upon this point.

"As a man makes his bed, so he will rest," says an old adage; and the truth of the assertion is proved in the history of national vicissitudes. In the history of the Jews we find a series of unsuccessful combats, sufferings, and dismal events, unparalleled among any other people. The hand of the Lord rested heavily upon Israel; but Israel, herself, it was

that forged the iron scourge. Such is the tutoring hand of an all-wise Providence, that it suffers the merited calamity to fall, as well upon nations as individuals, in order that it may serve as a salutary warning, and contribute to improvement.

The Jewish people is important in an universally historical point of view, not only because the moral regenerator of mankind sprung from it, but also because the hierarchy, as artificially formed among the Jews, furnished a pattern for that spiritual power which gave so remarkable a direction to the middle ages. With regard to their literature and poetry, as it appears in the books of the Old Testament, it retains throughout the character of boyhood, though bordering more on the juvenile. Their history is related in the style employed by a child, when narrating what it has heard. Their poetry has always a lyrical shade, and is a faithful expression of the profoundest feeling, of a self-conscious dependence upon God, and of unfeigned contrition, as we find it in the chastised child, sensible of its fault. Passionate warmth is the foundation of this poetry.

Opposed to the daring boy just described, appears one, nearer youth, arrayed in the morning light of clear serenity. Intellect and fancy are his rich inheritance on his brief but bright career, which leads through ways bestrewed with flowers, by the Muses and the Graces. Wherever *he* roams, there is life and gladness; and his look, now bent to earth, now heavenward raised, throws light far onward to futurity. On the

stage of History, the Greeks appear as a wonderful and mysterious collective body. Sometimes, though rarely, in life, we meet with forms which, standing on the confines between boyhood and youth, have an indescribable charm of loveliness spread over their whole being, and appear to us, as heaven-descended seraphs, who have come to make but a brief abode on our terrestrial plains. A similar impression is caused by the Greeks on the impartial observer. With them, intellect and fancy exist in beautiful and mutual harmony. Their endeavours for the highest beauty in the form are corresponding to those first movements in the human soul, where the sense of the Exalted and the Beautiful is awakened, and develops itself in bright and clear activity. At this period in the history of mankind, the ideal no longer remains an unheeded treasure in the mind, but takes form, and lives before us. This is the golden age of early poetry. In their science, art, and political life, the tendency of the Greeks was ever towards the highest activity: their valour was that of the boy, who, thoughtless and unheedful of success, throws himself into danger from a sort of poetical enthusiasm, and thereby conquers it: yet moderation and sobriety of mind, expressed by the Greek word “sophrosyne,” was a leading feature in the Grecian character; and, should this appear incompatible with the state of mind in a boy ripening into youth, I would remark, that, in eminent minds, this period of transition is so distinguished.

Profoundly thoughtful and contemplative, but longing for the field of active enterprise, is the youthful mind. It is a bud, not disclosed suddenly in the storm of passions, but by the play of the zephyr and the swell of softer feelings, gradually unfolding itself to light.

The Greeks draw every thing within the sphere of their national views. The philosophical and religious conceptions of the Egyptians, perhaps also of the Hindoos and Persians, are, at least in part, received into their religious structure, but moulded after the Greek form. To the Greek, nothing is unimportant: he seizes and turns every thing to his purposes. In him appears the restless activity of the boy, which is satisfied only when creating; but his creations, like those of the youth, assume a form of beauty. His intuitions of the universe are all joyous and sensual. He peoples Olympus with divinities, bearing the trace of his artistic skill; but frequently wanting in moral worth. The highest exemplification of Greek morality is *patriotism*; the direction of which is practical, for the service of the state, in as far as it secures the enjoyment of perfect liberty to the citizen. The Greek would quit his country, could he not extirpate the tyrants who oppress its freedom; and hence the number of colonies sprung from ancient Greece.

But, though sensuality thus prevails with the Greek, it is in no degree rude. Rude enjoyment is his aversion: while moderation, decency, and the

minutest observance of forms, restrain and soften all his passions. His valour is not the coarse and wild enthusiasm of the barbarian, braving death from love of plunder; nor the romantic chivalry of the middle ages, sacrificing life for honour and religion; nor the valour of modern times, obedient to the laws of duty and honour, and devoting all that is most dear, at the summons of the sovereign. No: the Greek dies an heroic death for the freedom of his country; because, to him, an enslaved country is as none. And to this enthusiastic idea of freedom and country, the disposition of the boy, approaching the age of youth, will be found to correspond; that is, in a richly endowed mind. Then is the truly republican period of our existence; and the perusal of the classics, then, kindles our enthusiasm more than at any subsequent time; though their beauties, in another sense, may move us more in our maturer years. This period of life is not favourable to religious views and sentiments; and the Greek fetters his internal feeling by the exterior senses. His intuitions of the Deity are transferred into the field of art, and there acquire form. With him, the conception of the divine arises, not from the calm of childhood's meditative mind, as with the Hindoos; nor by a reflection on the practical influence of the Deity, as with the Egyptians; much less from the idea of an immediate connexion between God and the children of men, which acknowledges the divine superiority of Providence, fears its punishments, and believes in its parental care, as

with the Jews. The Greek peoples his flowery nature with beautiful, potent, and beneficent beings, which, themselves dependent on a dark, inevitable power, are but idealized forms of human nature. The awful and indistinct idea of an eternal and inscrutable Being is satisfied only by their mythological belief in Fate: and thus man, like a fettered Prometheus, could scorn the power of his divinities, frail and finite as it was, when compared with the blind omnipotence of Destiny.

In this consideration of their character, we have seen the Greeks, like the boy, when ripening into youth, giving by the intellect a direction to the flight of fancy, and thus leading it to a harmonious activity. *Harmony* is the characteristic of Greek art: *moderation*, that of their political life. And when Alexander, with his victorious Macedonians, transgressed the boundaries of this moderation; when, after the subjugation of Grecian liberty, the Greeks, as a conquering people, violently endeavoured to enforce a higher culture and civilization on barbarous nations, then it was, that Grecian glory and splendour slowly but irrecoverably sunk in night; and then also, for the first time, the enthusiasm for art and science was kindled in the cold hearts of the Romans.

The Romans form, then, the next degree of transition from boyhood to youth, in the history of mankind; and, if in the Greeks, we find the boyish inclination prevailing, the Roman character partakes more of the adult. In history, the Romans, standing on

the confines of antiquity, form, as it were, the connecting link between the Pagan and Christian world; and the glory of their political and intellectual culture attains its height at that period of general ferment, when the regeneration of mankind develops itself. Let us take a glance at the character of this remarkable people. We have seen the Greeks making use of their political and religious institutions for the sole purpose of rendering existence bright and blissful; we find the Romans, on the contrary, employing the same engines solely for the gratification of their insatiable love of rule, which, from the origin of the commonwealth until its gradual decline, seems to have been the prevailing feature in the Roman character. The Greek studies, acquires, sings, travels, and conquers, in order to secure to himself the enjoyment of a serene existence: wherever he be, and under all circumstances, he endeavours to enhance the bliss of life. The Roman does all this,—nay, perhaps, surpasses the Greek in gigantic exertions, unequalled, indeed, by any nation upon earth,—but his only object is *to rule*. Empire, in itself, is for him the highest possible delight; and, more youth than boy, he strives for distinction, in order to be beheld and admired, content that the vanquished should hate, so they do but fear him: *oderint dum metuant*. Vanity and ambition are his springs of action. The Greek conquers the Persian, that he may liberate his country. He celebrates the triumph in pictures and in plays,—he salutes the victor with

shouts of joy at his national feasts, and this is the hero's only recompense. The Roman is not content with this:—he *humiliates* his foe. Captured kings, fettered to his triumphant car, must mourn their fallen greatness, and misfortune be insulted in order to flatter the national vanity.

In history, the Romans appear to us a people devoid of fancy, unpoetical, but in the possession of an overpowering intellect, which, as must be avowed, they employed in forming a constitution calculated, more than any other, to secure the empire of the world. Their laws are models of prescriptive edicts for the preservation of property and personal freedom to the citizen, and are framed with a consistency far beyond any thing which modern legislators have attempted. We must not omit to notice the strict adherence to *form*, observable in the Roman character generally, and which undoubtedly preserved to the people the fruits of former victories long after the spirit of morality and public virtue, which led to their achievement, had died away. In like manner, their religious formalities continued to be most scrupulously observed, when the belief in the gods had given way to the most miserable scepticism in the minds of all. Now this adherence to external forms is peculiar to a ripening youth, who clings with a kind of obstinacy to the customs of his earlier years. He would deem it highly reprehensible to omit any of those forms which his parents and tutors have long prescribed for his observance, even though they may

seem somewhat unsuited to his advancing age; and this influence is often found to operate in the most salutary manner; for, when the passions would hurry the youthful mind to dissipation, a fear of outraging decency, and of violating formal rules, imposes a wholesome restraint, favourable to morality, though it is not that pure source of religion and virtue, from which the elements of a high and manly mind must emanate. This it is, which we observe in the history of the Roman commonwealth. We cannot account for its existence through so many centuries after the genuine proud and noble spirit had passed away, but by the reverence for ancient manners and institutions which continued to influence the people.

I have called the Romans an *unpoetical* people, and I feel it my duty to justify this assertion.

Niebuhr has shown that the earliest dawn of Roman history is mythological; and further, that in the first decade of Livy, fragments of epic songs are to be found. Thus it would appear, that the primitive history of this nation has a poetical colouring, but it is by no means certain that these fragments are of Roman origin; probably they belong to the Etruscans, who were a people of high cultivation and poetical tendency. The Romans, before their acquaintance with the Greeks, had made but slight progress in literature generally, and still less in poetry; for a religious formula, occasionally appearing in verse, can hardly entitle a people to be called poetical. Religion and politics were the two great

levers, which raised the Romans to the summit of power and earthly splendour; and though it be true that the Augustan age was, in some degree, tinged with a poetical colouring, yet this, as we shall see, could have no influence on the popular character. Poets, indeed, shone forth, like stars, to cheer the gloomy night; yet, I think, we do them no injustice, when styling them planets, that shone with borrowed lustre, or, in other words, mere imitators of the Grecian bards. Roman poetry was never any thing more than court poetry. The vain Augustus and his favourite Mæcenas longed for verses *à la Grecque*, and they were supplied by Virgil and Horace; but this poetry never became an object of popular applause. The period of Roscius was of short duration; and a rhapsodist after the Grecian style must soon have yielded to the gladiator, had both at once been candidates for popular applause; nay, Herodotus himself, had he read his annals to a Roman audience, would scarcely have found a willing attention. Nero gained no praise by playing on the lyre; and it was more to the Roman taste, when Commodus performed the savage part of a gladiator. With the Romans, the histrionic art seems to have had no moral or religious tendency; and all their public entertainments, of which the expense is unequalled, even in the annals of eastern magnificence, bore a sanguinary character. Historians the Romans certainly could and did possess, because they possessed a history in their monuments, institutions, and traditions. In their art,

however, what was not of Greek origin must be termed rude, gigantic, and colossal.

It might be contended, that a new period in the history of mankind begins with the subversion of the western Roman empire, when German barbarians, breaking forth from their forests, altered the existing state of things ; but I think the period should rather be dated from the Augustan age, and for the following reasons :—that the Roman people, during the reign of Augustus, had reached the highest point of power and intellectual culture to which they ever attained; and that their subsequent history evinces only a gradual decline of Roman glory, which decline keeps pace with the diffusion of the Christian doctrine. If we further consider, that with the extinction of the Roman commonwealth, Pagan wisdom and Pagan art become less all-prevailing, it must surely appear, that a new period in the history of mankind commences with the Christian era. This opinion will, perhaps, be supported by some general observations, which are not unsuited to the present occasion.

Nothing in nature proceeds with abrupt rapidity ; whatever is durable unfolds itself gradually : and it is an acknowledged law of nature, in the moral as in the physical world, that the period of decline shall be proportionate in length to that of the development. We hardly perceive the rise of the youthful oak, which for a thousand years defies the storm ; and the man, who enjoys a lengthened youth, may look forward to a proportionate age. So, also, is it in the

history of the world; the transitions from one stage to another are imperceptible; and, as this history is an ever-moving stream, no distinct point can be defined as the boundary where these transitions take place. The different degrees in the age of mankind are so united, that the entire history resembles rather a sloping declivity, than a step-by-step gradation; and in the life of the individual man we also find, that the transitions from one period of life to the other are not so distinctly marked, that we can say, "Here boyhood ends, and youth begins." States and nations which expanded slowly enjoyed a proportionately long duration. It was from small beginnings that Rome gradually, but irresistibly, rose to its gigantic magnitude; and when this very magnitude became an incumbrance, when the Roman spirit had left the colossal form, and there were none to strengthen and cement its loosening joints, still it proceeded slowly in its unavoidable decay. The empire of Alexander, on the contrary, fell with its founder, and the power of Dschingischan and Napoleon burst in its unnatural swelling. The mental culture of nations must be regarded in the same view. Greek cultivation was prepared through centuries, before it reached its bloom, in the time of Pericles: and should this latter period seem comparatively short, we must reflect, that it lasted long enough to give the Greeks an eternal place in history; and that, from this short period, they shed a light which has pervaded the subsequent annals of all cultivated nations.

The Romans were slow learners in the school of wisdom and science, but what they have produced has withstood the destroying tooth of time; as, for instance, their laws, which were collected into a code long after the sun of Roman grandeur had set, and are, to this day, the source from which European legislators draw their wisdom.

The same gradual progression is observable in the first advancement of Christianity, which may be said to have stolen secretly among the Pagan nations, for centuries, before it could subvert the old and long-established gods and idols. But its influence, though slowly gained, was lasting; while, on the contrary, the doctrine of Mahomet instantaneously, as it were, collected millions round the crescent. Within a period of one hundred years, Islamism had spread through all the east and a portion of the west; but the doctrine has already survived itself, because, wanting the germ of perfectability, it is incapable of reformation.

These remarks were necessary, in order to prepare you for a consideration of the state of mankind at the period when Christianity was propagated. That Providence, whose beneficent influence we perceive at every step, furnishes a remedy for all evils; and when mankind stood on the verge of moral destruction, he sent to them a deliverer from their necessities.

The foundations of Paganism had been shaken to their centre, and neither philosophy nor religion, as

they existed at the birth of Christ, could satisfy the mind, thirsting after truth. Men were too far advanced in reason and reflection, to rest content with the childish consolations which the gods of Greece and Rome could offer them. A longing for something unknown and undefinable, like to that which often agitates the mind of ripening youth, began to move all nations. In Judea, this feeling was manifested in a hatred of oppression ; in Greece, altars were raised to the Unknown God ; and, in Egypt, the worship of Isis, which the Romans had also established in their capital, was intended to satisfy this yearning after the mysterious. But none of these was sufficient ; and a sort of chill despair, a tendency to scorn and scoff what had been hitherto held sacred, combined with a sense of utter inability to furnish any thing better, now filled the minds of men. Conscious of their guilt and moral degradation, they felt all the tortures of remorse, without any of the consolations of repentance. The ancient gods had been hurled from their elevation, and could afford no help to the afflicted. The philosophy of the Stoics gave this only solace,—the advice to suffer sorrow patiently because it was no evil ; and men, maddened by despair, plunged into a sensuality so gross, that the bare idea thereof must excite horror in the human mind, conscious of its divine origin. The literature—that infallible mirror of the moral state of a people—presents but too faithful a picture of the depravity prevailing at this period. Read the works of Sallust, Suetonius,

and Tacitus; compare them with the poetical effusions of Juvenal, Martial, and others; and every where you will find an expression of indignant sorrow for the fallen glory and vanished spirit of degraded Rome; a bitter irony which, in some instances, under a light, lascivious veil, attempts to hide a blush for the deep and all-prevailing immorality. Holiness is scoffed at; vulgarity is satirized; earthly power and splendour are scorned, but no celestial agency acknowledged: vices and follies are chastised, but no way to virtue pointed out. Cremutius Cordus was right, when styling Brutus and Cassius the last of the Romans. They dreamed a golden dream, but their efforts vanished as tracelessly as a vision, for their country; and the beautiful death of Seneca seemed to the Stoics irreconcilable with a life, which had been unable to withstand the allurements of vanity and ambition. From the time of Augustus, the Roman commonwealth is but a dissevering structure: in vain did Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius, endeavour to retard its overthrow: if it did not earlier fall, the praise is due to the first founders, who furnished materials, so lasting, for the structure.

The Roman people of this period is the historical representative of mankind, for their empire had received and embraced the elements of all nations, mentioned in previous history; and this circumstance it was, which so especially favoured the perfect regeneration of mankind, as the Christian religion gradually pervaded the whole mass of people throughout

the globe. The depraved national feeling of the Romans could not, it is true, be regenerated by this divine doctrine, which, indeed, had no such object. The Romans, as a nation, were to perish. To this the course of history had doomed them; but in their fall they became the benefactors of mankind, the teachers of their conquerors. The haughty, rude, but uncorrupted sons of Nature, bowed to the dust before the cross, presented to them by the vanquished Romans, whose sword they had broken. As the Christian faith was not originally intended to be propagated by conquest, its diffusion through the vast Roman empire, which was shortly to be subverted, was a circumstance highly favourable to the moral transformation of mankind. The Roman prescripts would, of themselves, have been insufficient to tame the wild minds of the barbarians; but, when combined with the gospel law, their influence gradually rendered those minds susceptible of civilization. How different from this was the operation of Islamism, which spread, like a running fire, over the whole eastern world, and rendered its adherents *victors*, it is true, yet, in many instances, destroyers of civilization; while Christianity made haughty conquerors captives to the cross, and members of civilized states! The duration of Arabian culture, short as it was, suffices to show that it did not emanate from Islamism. It was a meteor called forth by the prototypes of ancient classical culture, and by the wondrous juvenile enthusiasm of a nation, whose fancy was as rich and

exuberant, as their sun-burnt plains were barren and desolate; and, meteor-like, it vanished. The Turks have not advanced a single step in civilization since the conquest of Constantinople, except what they have gained by their political and commercial relations with Europe: and thus we have an historical proof, that Islamism could exercise no lasting influence on the mental formation of mankind; but that, on the contrary, it has kept its adherents longer in the trammels of irreligion and barbarism than even the Pagan creeds did with theirs.

Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman culture were necessary, in order to prepare mankind for Christian wisdom. In the early ages, man either felt himself to be one of a distinct *caste*, as was the case with the Hindoos and Egyptians; or he deemed himself a member of a nation, specially favoured by God, as did the Jews; or he boasted of his denizenship in a state which regarded the rest of their contemporaries as barbarians, like the Greeks and Romans. And it were vain to deny that to this selfishness much of the energy, by which the ancient nations are so strikingly distinguished from the moderns, is attributable. But while civilization advanced, men's views became more extended; as, in the individual, every degree of cultivation, however partial, strengthens the mental power. It was requisite that the human race should pass through the different periods of improvement, in order to exercise their strength, and to prepare the boy for the deeds of youth; but

through all the stages of progression, a continual and growing, though undefined, desire for a more satisfying futurity, evinced the consciousness that what had been already enjoyed, felt, and thought, was insufficient for the deeply acknowledged want of a higher moral state. Fancy and intellect, the two characteristic qualities of the mind among the ancients, at length exhausted themselves. Fancy could find nothing which intellect did not crush; nor could intellect create any thing to appease the suffering mind. The love of freedom and country was destroyed, and all was vacancy, when the revival of those feelings was effected by the one sentiment of love to the Creator, which had hitherto been unperceived, or indistinctly known. All love, all noble sentiments, were concentrated in this great pervading principle; and thus *feeling* and *sentiment* became the ruling elements in the human mind, instead of *fancy* and *intellect*, which, during the classical period, had predominated. With the awakening of this power in the soul, by the propagation of Christianity, the regeneration of mankind and the career of its youth begin.

Man now occupies a higher eminence. He no longer appertains to an exclusive *caste*, nor to a people especially favoured by God, nor to a republic distinguished by its customs and laws. The feeling of love, of which he has now a clear conception, leads him to adore a common Father, who, in the spirit of love, embraces all his creatures with the same pa-

ternal fondness. Man now beholds a brother in his fellow-man. He despises not the love of freedom and of country, those mighty levers of Paganism; but they are comprehended in the one feeling of love to his Creator, which embraces that of freedom, country, state, mankind.

I have already stated, that this change could only have been effected by gradual advances, and not by sudden transition. In the middle ages, we even meet with appearances which cause a fear lest mankind might retrograde: yet these are but appearances. Amidst blood and tears, the genius of mankind struggles onward for perfection; and there is no rest, still less can there be return. We often find that the first ten centuries of the Christian era are termed the *dark ages*, and described as having been plunged in barbarism; an opinion which, to me, appears questionable, inasmuch as, from century to century, we perceive the light of higher cultivation, slowly and faintly indeed, but increasingly, brightening above the ruins of Roman grandeur. The northern hordes, who rushed from their forest haunts, to the destruction of the old world and the foundation of the new, were assuredly barbarians, as compared with the sensual, enervated, but refined Romans; yet the influence of Christianity imperceptibly softened their primitive rudeness, and, in the cultivation which succeeded it, we have an instance, that the harder the material, the more highly it may be polished.

The elements of the Roman character, as far as

they could be conveyed by language, laws, and some scanty relics of science and art, passed into the political and civil life of the new adventurers, and had no small influence on the culture of the western states. We now see the youth stand forward, having laid aside whatever is boyish. We frequently find him misguided by overpowering feeling,—led astray by passion; but this serves only as a preparatory struggling for his inward and outward improvement, and his better nature always gains the ascendancy within him.

We may here comprehend all the western nations under one view, taking them as a collective people; for, with the exception of the Slavonians, the descent of these different nations is, more or less, in common; and this proceeding will be further justified by the similarity of character prevailing among them, and by the analogous course of their moral and political improvement. I have no wish to deny the peculiar character of every nation; but the general family likeness, if I may so call it, among the western peoples of German origin, still remains, and for the purpose of our present consideration, their history is one and the same. Poetry and chivalry, feudalism and hierarchy, crusades and the reformation, are historical subjects, which, with all the occidental peoples, are represented by similar features and influences. A chord struck at one extremity of Europe resounded through the whole of western Christendom; and thus the Christian doctrine pervaded those nations with a

consciousness of their being united in relation to the Deity.

I have above pointed out the preponderance of *feeling*, as characteristic of the middle ages; but, gentlemen, you must not conceive that fancy and intellect, the leading features of the classical age, had been wholly extinguished. In the history of the world, no nation passes away without transmitting its spiritual treasures to the succeeding; and thus every period receives the spiritual state of that which has gone before it, and reflects in the present the character of the past. This will not be always equally perceptible;—times of disturbance, of great national commotion arise, and, apparently, have an injurious effect on the intellectual progress of mankind: yet these mental exercises serve as useful preparatives for the arts of peace. In the hands of Providence, war is a powerful means for the propagation of intellectual culture among men. War gave Greek cultivation to the Romans, and war subjected German barbarians to the civilizing influence of their vanquished foes. The crusades roused Europe from its torpor to a new and active life; and we may safely assert, that the thirty years' war completed the reformation. In itself, war is unquestionably an evil; but Providence sends it, like the tempests, to purify the air, and to prevent the more fatal evils of enervation and torpor. If, then, during the great wars among mankind, mental culture be apparently suspended, we should regard this as a state prepara-

tory to the highest efforts; for in the calm, succeeding these national storms, we often see that arts and sciences flourish in a degree proportionate to the apparent oblivion into which they had fallen during the strife. In the youth of mankind, during the middle ages, *fancy* and *intellect* were subservient to *feeling*, which was expressed by *faith*. I have no wish to be thought the unqualified eulogist of the middle ages; I acknowledge the dark side of this period, and its many deficiencies: but the freshness of youthful life, the great activity among all classes, and the flourishing state of poetry and art, cannot be denied, though they are too often treated by the moderns with unmerited contempt. The views, customs, manners, laws, and constitution of the old world had passed over to the new, where they became amalgamated with those of the northern nations; and the historical observer seems to discover an unknown region, where he beholds, in utter amazement, the motley appearances of the middle ages, especially as they stand forth after the destruction of Rome. The sphere of mankind appears to be entirely changed. It is no longer the horizon of a child;—new elements appear;—honour, love, and faith, constitute the character of a period to which modern times have rightly given the denomination of *romantic*. It is in this romantic period that we find the three forms, chivalry, hierarchy, and the minne-song,—forms, which lend to this remarkable epoch the beautiful colours in which we see it brighten. We see chivalry and

hierarchy, the forms of *honour* and of *faith*, existing as worldly empire and spiritual dominion, for a time in peace with each other, but at length coming into passionate contact ; and their strife is the great and important historical event, round which the whole life and activity of the middle ages are found to revolve. Such a strife, considered in itself, and without reference to political consequences, must have a deep interest for the historical observer ; but how is such interest heightened, when we reflect that the development of the various forms of civil society, and also the poetical character of the middle ages, can be explained only by watching the course of this contention ! A mediatrix between the two opposing elements stands Poetry, subservient to, and reconciling, both. How this is to be understood I purpose to show by a few explanatory remarks.

Christianity, as has been remarked, could not revive, in the enervated Romans, that exalted national feeling, by which they had attained to such power and grandeur. On the contrary, through its cosmopolitan tendency, it accelerated that extinction of the exclusive Roman mind, which was finally consummated by Constantine, when he removed the seat of empire from Rome. The preservation of a Roman people was no longer the question : the sole object was the foundation of an imperial throne, with a corresponding dominion ; and it is clear, that the annihilation of this colossal power, in all the nations of the then known world, contributed greatly to the

diffusion of Christianity throughout Europe. The spirit of Christianity was decidedly opposed to that of the Roman nation; the latter being an exclusive egotism, founded solely on the preponderance of the Roman people over all others. Roman denizenship was the highest honour to which barbarians could aspire, and was seldom conferred, even upon kings. With the Romans, not the man, but the citizen, was esteemed, and they were called upon, by the very constitution of their commonwealth, to become the oppressors of every alien. Christianity, on the contrary, excites in every man, of whatever state or nation, an esteem for the dignity of mankind, without reference to the claims of citizenship. The citizenship which it regards in man is that of *heaven*; and thus we see Roman power and customs decline in the same measure that Christianity increases and diffuses itself. We must not, however, infer from this (as many have done in modern times), that the consequent result of Christianity is to suppress national feeling, and to introduce a false cosmopolitanism. Such an opinion I, for one, must unequivocally disclaim. History witnesses that true national feeling, that freedom and independence are encouraged, rather than suppressed, by the doctrines of Christianity. It is opposed solely to all egotism, public as well as private, national as individual. Peoples and states now enjoy a peaceable co-existence in just equilibrium, and this favourable circumstance results, not from political combinations, but from the deep-rooted love

of freedom, which is inculcated by the christian precepts. They interfere not with the relation of the citizen to his state, excepting when such relation occasions a contempt for the dignity of manhood in the person of an alien. To the Roman character Christianity was indeed opposed, because the subjugation of other nations formed a chief feature of that character; but among the modern European peoples its influence promotes the truest patriotism, acknowledging in an alien, not the freeman only, but the Christian and the citizen, of a friendly state.

Christianity has, no doubt, in view to unite the whole human race, but, at the same time, to preserve the distinction of families or nations, marked by natural confines or by difference of language. According to the spirit of this divine doctrine, which corresponds to the true dignity of mankind, the monocracy of one people over the others is unattainable, and all attempts thereat have been frustrated by the genuine Christian feeling, inculcated among the nations. I repeat, that the influence of Christianity is directed to the spiritual man, in order to lead him to his eternal country, and only interferes with the earthly man, taken as a natural product, when such interference is requisite, as the health of the body promotes that of the soul. Taken as a natural product, man belongs, like the flower of the field, or the creature of the desert, to a determined species, for which boundaries have been marked out by Providence. He belongs to his nation, as to the sphere

which nature has allotted to him, wherein he may exert his tendency towards moral perfection. Thus he has an earthly country, which he defends from unjust attacks, on the same principles of right and duty, which bind him to protect the earthly tenement of his soul against injury and destruction.

During the middle ages we see this tendency of Christianity to lead mankind to a great union—its definitive moral aim—represented in the form of hierarchy, but in a human manner, and, therefore, imperfectly and perishably. The appearance of the papacy, or hierarchy, during the middle ages, with its all-crushing power, has indeed something revolting for our present notions, in the state of moral and religious cultivation to which we have arrived. But our historical opinions should not be formed from the point where we now stand ; we ought to trace the life of mankind through its various degrees and periods ;—in a word, we should *follow* history, and not strive to *form* it.

The European peoples of the middle ages were in the first stage of youth, when the sensual impulses predominate, notwithstanding the existence of an exalted moral tendency. These impulses frequently threaten the annihilation of the spiritual strength ; and it is necessary to work upon the sensual man by sensual means. During the ferment accompanying the destruction of the Roman empire in the west, the papacy had gradually arisen from small beginnings ; but, during the fifth, sixth, and seventh

centuries, the European nations were too unsettled for the hierarchical power to gain a decided form. The violent commotions of these peoples undulated irresistibly towards that political state when social connexions, or, in other words, christian states, arose, which, however, were of very short duration, and served only as a transition to those more recent. Thus the empires of Odoacer and of Theodric, erected out of the ruins of Roman power, perished. The Lombardian empire fell beneath the iron arm of Charles the Great; and he was the first who, taking a comprehensive view of the wants of his time, united the nations, fatigued by such multifarious struggles, into one common social form, and led them to the so-much-wished repose. With the consolidation of the temporal power, that of the spiritual kept pace; and as, by the nature of the christian doctrine, no materials for an external structure could be furnished thereby, it being a moral institution, without any prescribed form, paganism and Judaism were placed in requisition for this purpose. Yet at the time of Charles the Great, the pope was but the humble “servant of the servants of the Lord,” without earthly importance, till that great monarch himself planted the germ of the future power, which became so dangerous to his successors. By confirming the donation of the exarchate, made by Pepin to Pope Zachary, the emperor gave to the bishops of Rome a temporal arm, with which, at a later period, the spiritual thunders were most effectually wielded. The

empire of Charlemagne owed its speedy dissolution to the discordant elements of which it was composed; a cause which, more frequently than family events, leads to the division of great empires.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, we see the foundation of our present political institutions laid down; for all the modern states were at this period either formed, or about to be so. The feudal system, which grew out of the warlike and wandering life of the German nations, may be called the primary principle in the formation of most of the modern European states. The power of the princes increased with the erection of cities, and the establishment of the third class, the burgesses, which, particularly for the German emperor, became an instrument of incalculable power. The knights were opposed to the civilians, and ready to forward the ambitious views of the ruling monarch, and at the same time to gratify that passion for military adventure, which seems to have been inherent among the German tribes. Emperors who, like Henry I. and Otho the Great, regarded themselves as the chiefs of the European sovereigns, and were acknowledged as such, gave so great a preponderance to earthly power and majesty, that the rising freedom of the various European nations might have been smothered by the constitution of an universal monarchy, like that of Rome, had not a counterpoise been furnished in the power of the church. The German emperor, and at the same time king of the Romans, stood at the head of

European chivalry and monarchy; and being the first knight, as well as first prince, of his age, he is to be considered as the great representative of that *earthly honour* which was the ruling idea of the time, and which, in the later periods of the middle ages, subdued and softened by *faith* and *charity*, gave to events so flourishing a character. Could this feeling of honour have taken a separate and exclusive direction among the European peoples, all the noble faculties of mind must have yielded to its ascendancy, and the blessings of Christianity would have been neutralized by the prevalence of earthly ambition. But in the form of *hierarchy*, which developed itself in the same proportion as the imperial power, *faith* gained a representative, which counterbalanced the earthly power, and kept the fiery youth within the limits of moderation. I have already mentioned, and would here repeat, that, as sin in the individual man, so an injurious tendency in an entire epoch, must always serve the purposes of Providence, and eventually lead to wholesome results. The hierarchical establishment, as we find it completed during the middle ages, is undoubtedly opposed to the spirit of Christianity. Its form is throughout unchristian. The power of the popes was modelled after that of the high priest of the Jews, and many of their ceremonies and prescripts, but particularly their spiritual weapons of excommunication and tithes, were taken from the Levitical observances of the time after Moses. In the New Testament no mention is made of a

visible church ; but what is there said of one *internal* and *invisible* was applied to the *external* form of the Romish church, which had constituted itself during successive centuries ; the popes always being careful to strengthen their spiritual and political influence in an equal degree.

If we carefully observe the course taken by the history of mankind through the first thousand years after Christ, it is evident that the sensual or earthly tendency of the European nations threatened to become all-ruling ; and the danger was the more imminent, inasmuch as it arose, after European national life had gained a systematic form by the establishment of particular states. The people must inevitably have sunk into barbarism and ignorance, had not the visible arm of the spiritual power counteracted the principle of worldly might and earthly honour, which were the chief manifestations of the sensual tendency. In order the more effectually to exercise its influence, this spiritual power employed all temporal means, pure and impure ; yet Providence failed not to guide it to favourable issues. The formation of the hierarchy, as here described, was not occasioned solely by the genius of certain men who filled the papal chair : it resulted from the public feeling of the times, especially as regarded the clergy ; a body which gradually possessed itself of extensive power, and omitted no opportunity of strengthening it by constant use. When eminent members of the church became more intimately acquainted with the secret

and effective spell of the spiritual weapons, they employed them for the defence and extension of their temporal power; and Gregory VII. must be said to have merited the rod of empire, because he wielded it so well. It is, however, erroneous to suppose that *he* was the sole author of hierarchical supremacy, any more than Luther was that of the Reformation. Centuries had worked in the rise of that supremacy, and centuries were necessary to its decline.

The abuse of power must eventually operate as a furtherance of human civilization; and the popes, once in possession of the spell of spiritual dominion, by their intemperate and flagrant abuse of it, caused its overthrow; for a remedy grows out of the excess of every evil. When the popes employed their spiritual power solely for the increase of earthly domination,—when in mind, manners, and morals, they had become mere temporal princes,—when their champions stood far below the children of this world in moral dignity,—then no surrounding halo, no excommunicating spells, could protect or assist them; and the sun of papal power set, never again to rise with pristine brightness on the christian horizon. In the gradual decline of this spiritual power, which abused the temporal means in its possession, we find one of the most splendid triumphs which human nature has effected. For neither worldly might, nor emperor, nor king, subdued the pope; but that eternal tendency of the human mind towards per-

fection, by which the hierarchy first rose, and by which, alone, it fell.

After the imperial power, which was about to become injurious to mankind through the proud and heedless emperor Henry IV. (at the close of the eleventh century) had been suppressed by the hierarchy; this latter body opened to European Christendom, at that period impatient for action, a field, wherein religious and poetical activity were equally called into exercise. I allude to the crusades, which, though they certainly display the bewilderment of youth, yet, at the same time, evince the highest exercise of the human mind—self-denial; and before the historical tribunal they should be judged with reference to the religious and poetical enthusiasm, out of which they arose, instead of being coldly deemed a mischievous error in mankind. They may, indeed, have sprung from sources, which the utilitarian intellect of modern times condemns as fantastic; still the fact of this immense exertion of moral strength remains undisturbed, a beautiful monument of human disinterestedness in the pursuit of one grand idea. The crusades were called forth, not by the power of the popes, nor by the fanaticism of Peter the Hermit, but by the spirit of the time. As in the first centuries of the christian era, we see the north-eastern nations, till then unknown to the civilized world, set in motion by an undefined and instinctive impulse, for which no political cause can be given; so, in the middle ages, we see the nations

as it were electrically moved, and though the movement may, in great measure, be attributed to religious feeling, still this would have scarcely sufficed, had not the want of an universally pervading agitation been felt among mankind. The popes perceived this feeling, and gave it the direction most to their advantage; acting herein like man, who cannot create the lightning, yet conducts it where he pleases.

Without these crusades, during the struggle between the spiritual and temporal power, first excited by Hildebrand and continued by his successors in the papacy, Europe might have been subjected to the mighty arm of the German emperor. A sort of Roman universal empire would have established itself; and to this, as we have seen, the spirit of Christianity was diametrically opposed. The crusades made a salutary diversion in favour of the hierarchy, and preserved the nations from an universal despotism. How wonderfully, during the ferment of this stormy time, we see the germs of modern European civilization develop themselves! Beside the class of knights, that of the burgesses stands forth in perfect form, while the distinctions of bond and freeman gradually disappear. The rapid advance, made by the class of burgesses, in power and influence, is seen in the struggle between the emperor Barbarossa and the confederate towns of Lombardy, as also in the more recent confederacy of the Suabian towns, and that of the Hans towns.

The youth now matures more and more to manhood. Poetry and science, commerce and industry, excited and promoted by the general intercourse and universal tendency to one aim among the European nations, become the ornament and bliss of human life. Let us not, then, look with a contemptuous smile upon an event, so important to the culture of mankind, as the crusades. Let us not deem them the climax of human folly. They form the Argonaut expedition of European history, and, like it, are a poetical meteor in the biography of mankind.

If we have seen in the emperor, as the head of chivalry or knighthood, the representative of worldly honour; and in the pope, as the head of the clergy, that of faith; we must now seek a representative of love, as the mediatrix between these two contending elements, as above stated. But, gentlemen, no lay or clerical dignitary steps forward in the field of history as the exclusive claimant of this honour. Love had, indeed, its representative in the poets, who were even styled the singers of love, *minnesingers*: but we find them wielding the sceptre, as well as the crosier, brandishing the sword, and administering the chalice; though it must be confessed that the clergy disputed, neither so eagerly nor so successfully, with the knighthood for the poetical laurel, as for other and more substantial advantages. Poetry it was, which became the ruler of the passions, that softened the horrors of rugged war,

and, borne on the wings of fancy and feeling, celebrated the triumphs of chivalric valour, of constant faith, of eternal and of earthly love. The silver tones of the Provençal troubadours called forth the sonorous and heaven-ascending voices of the German minne-singers. Read the lyrical songs of Heinrich von Veldeck ; simple, innocent, and mild as the summer breeze, unclosing the floweret of the field. Read the three wonderful epics of Wolfram von Eschenbach, Percival, Titurel, and Lohengrim, and you will be undecided whether to admire more the skilful delineation of character, the heroic virtue and mental purity of his heroes, and the devotedness and gentle piety of his heroines, or the amazing power of imagination, by which he leads you through the mazes of fanciful adventure, and introduces you within the circle of domestic life. Read the romantic epos of Gottfried von Strasburg, Tristan and Isalde, or the songs of Walther von der Vogelweide, and even those of the last minne-singer of the thirteenth century, Conrad von Würzburg, and every where you will find the religion of life represented in poetry. Three hundred minne-singers were the choristers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, whose songs resounded through all the provinces of Germany, every where exciting the feeling of religion and of love, and the deepest veneration for the female sex ; a veneration which, since that time, has ever remained a ground feature of the German national character and literature. The minne-song is one of the most

striking appearances in the history of poetry. In it, the lyrical is the prevailing tendency. Every where the life in nature and God is mysteriously celebrated and portrayed; and, bounded as is the lyrical horizon, the minne-singers displayed within it all the charms of a rich and luxuriant fancy. Life, with its wars and broils, its splendour of chivalry and love, and admiration of the fair, was always placed in relation with the mysteries of faith and heavenly love.

The middle ages had no detached class of spiritual songs, such as we find in later times. The earthly and the heavenly is so closely mingled as to be inseparable; and even in the epic poems of Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strasburg, and Conrad von Würzburg, religion is the basis of the power of the poet; evincing the tendency, conscious or unconscious, to unite the conflicting elements. Love, "minne," in the hands of the poet, is the cement for the construction of his fanciful buildings: by love he reconciles emperor and pope, chivalry and clergy, church and state, honour and faith, earth and heaven. He, the herald of peace, standing on the neutral ground, is a conciliator, uniting in his breast the ideas of honour and faith, and combining them by the power of love. By the light of his songs alone, an otherwise incomprehensible age becomes intelligible for the historical inquirer.

In tracing the several degrees of human culture, we may mourn over the evil inclination of the boy and of the youth, while we rejoice at their occasional

exertions for the noble and the exalted; yet we cannot wonder that they thus err and sin. The boy conceives and acts as boy; the youth as youth. As little should this surprise us, as that we ourselves did not, in our boyhood, act as men.

In the strife between worldly power, as the representative of honour, and the hierarchy, as that of faith, we observe the same passionate conflict which is found in a youth endowed with an easily susceptive mind. In the youth of man, honour, as ambition, draws towards the earthly; religious feeling to the heavenly: and when the latter gains the ascendant, still the youth has not won the true way to his safety; because *reason* is not yet awakened, as the leading principle in its full and perfect strength. Hence he often falls into error, on his progress to brighter regions. In one instance, superstition darkens his mind: in another, bigotry paralyzes the power of vigorous action. He then seeks consolation in symbolic forms, which satisfy him in some measure, because they allude, however darkly, to the foreboding which fills his soul. On the way to light, though the sense of the celestial has decidedly awakened his thirst for truth, yet he so often goes astray in the darksome by-paths of error, that he not unfrequently appears lost for a higher life. In atonements and empty forms of prayer he would fain find something meritorious. Superstition and sophistry combine to his misguiding: but at length a clearer mental day begins to dawn within him. The more he expe-

riences in life,—the more he suffers and strives,—the more does reason lift him into light, rendering the darkling veil which overclouds his soul, and threatens its destruction.

Such, gentlemen, is the picture presented by history of the state of European mankind during the middle ages: but, before I offer you some general remarks, in further elucidation of this state, allow me to make particular allusion to the changes, which took place in the moral and intellectual life of Germany, during the fifteenth century.

When with the extinction of the glorious house of Hohenstaufen, in the middle of the thirteenth century, the struggle between the champions of worldly honour and of faith had subsided,—the latter having gained an undisputed ascendancy,—then the tones of the singers of love also died away, as nothing was left for them to reconcile—no theme for them to celebrate. Religious enthusiasm was breathing its last. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the plans and foundations of those monuments of devotion, the venerable domes of Germany—hymns, as it were, eternalized in that form, for the glorification of faith—were conceived and laid, but the fainting spirit of religion, in the succeeding centuries, was insufficient for inspiring the cooler descendants to execute and complete the grand conceptions of their forefathers; and thus the unfinished temples stand, the broken accents of expiring piety. The exalted spirit of chivalry, witnessed by historical appearances, such

as Frederick Barbarossa, that bold eagle among the German emperors, and the lion-hearted Richard of England, the mirror of christian knighthood ; confirmed by the romantic pictures, as we find them delineated in the German Iliad, the Niebelungen,—this spirit of chivalry was silently subsiding. While faith became torpid in the rugged restrictions of hierarchical forms, honour gave way before the utilitarian eagerness for wealth and gain. In vain the enlightened Frederick II. attempted to seize the youth of mankind by his flying locks. Heedless of the grasp, the giant hurried on his way, abandoning the summits of poetry for the level plains of practical endeavour. But the poets of love did not accompany the fugitive ; and the genius of the age reversed his torch. It is true that, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, we find the lovely lyre of Heinrich of Meissen, surnamed “Frauen lob” (praise of women), reminding us of the vanished glory of the minne-song. But his best lays belong to the thirteenth century ; and when we see the women of Mainz, themselves, bearing the body of their favourite to the grave, which they bestrew with flowers, and moisten with wine and with their tears, it appears as though they, in the foreboding of an irretrievable loss, fancied that they were burying poetry itself with the departed bard.

Gentlemen, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represent Germany in any thing but a favourable light, as to poetry. With the elevation of Rudolph of Habsburg to the imperial throne, other ideas,

than those which had been prevalent during the thirteenth century, became the ruling. Rudolph was a powerful prince, and did much towards suppressing the insolence of the petty nobility, but his chief object, under all circumstances, was the aggrandizement of his family fortunes. The spirit of husbandry and gain found powerful promoters in the emperors of Germany, who thenceforward, with few exceptions, were from the house of Habsburg. This spirit soon pervaded the whole empire, and hence the flourishing state of the middle classes of the imperial free towns, and of the Hans towns. At no period has Germany enjoyed greater wealth than during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But, while the emperors were thus employed in securing or extending their private domains, the German princes laid the foundation of an independence which, centuries later, caused the decay of a once magnificent structure, long the glory of Europe, but from which the spirit, which had imparted life and strength to it, had fled. The nobility was no more than proud and chivalrous knighthood, burning with enthusiasm for religion and honour, for love to the fair and to poetry. They became way-laying robbers, greedy for plunder, and ever ready to pillage the wealthier citizen, who sought shelter within their walls. Poetry, which had once glowed in the breasts of their ancestors, now fled affrighted from the rude embrace of Mars, and, as it were, in disguise, sought refuge in the humbler dwellings of the burghesses. The meister-song is considered as an offspring

of the minne-song ; to me it appears rather the stiff form of that once flourishing popular poetry, which had grown old and could not be revived. The meister-singers of a later period were generally humble tradesmen. But the heavenly muse did not flourish in the abodes of the artizan, as she had done in the palaces of emperors and kings, and in the tournaments of a high and splendid chivalry. Nay, the chastity of the German muse, which through all centuries has preserved its virgin crown inviolate, was placed in peril by the *un-German* handling of one Rosenplüt, surnamed "the Schnepperer." These meister-singers, in order to treat the art with German solidity and industry, formed schools of poetry, "Meister-schulen," in which the divine art was taught according to the rules and systematic laws of trade. Their poetical code was contained in a kind of "ars poetica," called "Tabulatur," filled with edifying specimens of poetic legislation, founded on the best and most specious reasons ; as, for instance, the following—"No rhymed stanza shall contain more than thirteen syllables." And why? "In order that the poet may not lose breath!"

But, gentlemen, whatever be the faults of the meister-song, we should not regard it with absolute contempt. We see, it is true, the muse disguised as a German serving-maid, yet the occasional flashes of divine spirit announce that she is conscious of her dignity; and among the meister-singers we sometimes meet with men who, like the ingenious Peter

Suchenwirth and Muscatblüt, afford proof that poetry and music are the perpetual inheritance of the German people.

Intellect, especially during the fifteenth century, was a better assistant than fancy, to reason. While poetry was unable to re-ascend the summit from which she had fallen, science and industry made unprecedented advances. It is not my intention to praise the revived study and introduction of the Roman law into Germany, as any great benefit for that nation, of whom Tacitus boasted, that with them “Good morals availed more than elsewhere good laws.” The glosses of the Bolognese jurisconsults imparted but little benefit to the sense of right among the Germans, though it must be confessed that the study of the law and of scholastic philosophy sharpened the intellects of my worthy countrymen. When the polemical discussions of the sixteenth century were so vehemently conducted, the offensive and defensive weapons, then used, had been long before furnished by Irnerius, Acursius, Petrus Lombardus, and others. I should not, however, imagine that truth gained much by this warfare. One great furtherance of intellectual culture must be particularly mentioned; namely, the establishment of universities, which became the nurseries of science, and thus superseded the literary monopoly of the clergy and monasteries. Their foundation on German ground is to be hailed with more satisfaction than the dark invention of Berthold Schwartz, who, by his gunpowder process, was the

destroyer of chivalry and the supporter of standing armies. Men might have attained to the present point of cultivation without knowing how to sweep off their fellow-creatures *en masse*:—not so, however, with the art of printing, which was one of Luther's most powerful allies in his pious warfare.

If we now throw a glance on the general state of European culture, we find that the period of the crusades—that is, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—seems the spring-time of the juvenile age in European mankind. The tendency of the poetry of the middle ages, which reached its point of culmination in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is throughout lyrical, thus corresponding to the feeling of youth. Youth is the period of lyrical song, as the biographies of the brightest geniuses in literary history will show.

With the extinction of the imperial house of Hohenstaufen, Europe assumed a fresh aspect. At first the influence of the clergy on the popular character and cultivation was undisputed; but their immorality increased with their increasing power; while Europe, under hierarchical and monastic dominion, could neither attain to a consciousness of its strength nor of its aim, to which it was, nevertheless, tending by the invisible guidance of Providence. Those faculties which, in the latter periods, have reached perfection, were gradually unfolded, and became the means of bursting the bonds which enthralled the human mind. From time to time the light of reason

broke through the gloom, which it could not yet dispel, shining as the herald of that day, which afterwards so brightly dawned. The whole of the fourteenth century certainly appears a waste, where we discover but here and there a pleasing oasis ; but in the fifteenth, the genius of mankind is in motion. Great historical events,—as the conquest of Constantinople, and the refuge of Greek scholars in Europe ; the invention of printing, that great engine for all after times in the propagation of religious and scientific knowledge ; finally, the discovery of America,—were all immediately subservient to the advancement of the human mind towards manhood. They were splendid evidences of an innate impulse to activity. The poetical life of nations, expressed in the songs of the troubadours and minne-singers, had passed away, but was succeeded by a more practical employment of reason, to which the scholastic exercises, however tedious and futile they may now appear, contributed in no mean degree. At the pile of Huss was kindled the torch which lit Luther in reading the ninety-five theses, that perplexed the pope, and made him tremble on his seven hills. In silence and seeming quiet, mankind were taking breath, preparatory to an immense exertion : weapons were selected, and the arena chosen, in which the victory was to be decided. In the south of Europe, Dante and Petrarch had long since been the song-birds, announcing the dawn of truth and beauty for Italy. In the north, a deep silence prevailed ; the bold war songs of the old

northern skalds having subsided with the inspiration of mythology and martial exploits. The sounds of the meister-song in Germany, found no echo in the popular mind ; but the study of the Greek classics was earnestly pursued at the universities, and the more general knowledge of Greek language and science became a powerful means for moving the mass of intelligence during the Reformation. The immorality of the catholic clergy had increased to such a pitch, that it became absolutely loathsome to the laity. The papal chair was no longer imperviously enveloped by the *nimbus* of sanctity ; worldly wit and acuteness sometimes venturing to rend the hitherto sacred veil.

Such was the mental state of Europe. Let us now consider the political aspect of the nations at the period in question. Their constitutions were equably secured. If the Turks had wrested the finest provinces of the east from the enervated Greeks, and placed the crescent on the church of St. Sophia, still, in the west of Europe, this signal lost its ascendant by the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain and from Europe, through the conquest of Granada. In England, the sanguinary struggles, which had lasted for so long a time between the parties of the White and Red Rose, had ceased with the accession of Henry VII., and the royal power became firmly consolidated. In France, the might of the *haute noblesse* was broken ; and, to the advantage and protection of the people, the crown acquired an absolute sway, which had

hitherto been shared with the aristocracy. In Scandinavia a mighty spirit was aroused against foreign despotism : the struggle was lasting, and Engelbrecht and the two Stures showed the Danes and the world that Swedes rely not in vain for freedom on their sword. The east of Europe lay under Cimmerian darkness, and mankind was there in a listless torpor, from which, two centuries later, the spirit of Peter the Great alone could arouse it. Italy, divided into small states, was basking in the sunshine of papal splendour. Yet, since the migration of the popes from Rome to Avignon, which, for seventy years, evinced their dependency upon the temporal power of France ; and since the vigorous attacks of John Wycliff, the precursor of Huss, on those satellites of popery, the mendicant friars, it had become, at last, manifest to the laity of Europe that the clergy no longer was an all-powerful body ; the splendour of the *mitre* being unable to outshine the occasional glances of common sense. Throughout the whole of Europe, the third class, the burgesses, had risen to wealth and freedom ; and even the peasants of Switzerland had long ago proved at Morgarten and Sempach, and more recently at Murten, that bravery is not the exclusive inheritance of nobility. The youth was now matured to a man, and only wanted resolution to express his manhood, and to achieve emancipation.

It will be worth while to premise, at this stage of our survey, a few words concerning the champion of European mankind, who solemnly declared that

resolution, and by whose zeal, energy, and perseverance it was mainly carried into effect.

Great men are so, because, comprehending the want of the period in which they live, they give to it a mighty expression, combining the elements of the public spirit in their own mind. Every truly great mind is the mirror of the fairest portion of its time; and I may venture to affirm that human greatness can never be much in advance of the spirit of the time at which it appears. Alexander, Cæsar, Mahomet, Charlemagne, Gregory VII., &c. are the heroes of their time and history, because they conceived and represented the highest ideas of the periods in which they flourished: and thus Luther is undoubtedly the greatest man, not only of his country, but of the whole christian era ; for he, by the innate power of enthusiasm, expressed heroically, but moderately, the want of his time, and placed himself at the head of those who fought for the liberty of that reason, which was now awakened in the minds of men. He fought, and conquered, undaunted by the fulminations hurled against him from Rome. But far be it from us to call this single man, who, if born at a less agitated period, would, in all probability, have remained simply an honourable private character ;—far be it from us, I say, to call him the author of an event so universal as the Reformation. Luther was the chief mental warrior of his age. Reason chose him as her champion, and he proved himself fully worthy of the cause ; for never did worldly knight appear in the lists with more humility, courage, and self-denial, than was evinced by this

spiritual hero. Whatever he did, was done by divine impulse, in answer to the voice in his own heart, and to the summons of the age. A determined plan, such as worldly business requires, he could not lay down for the reform of the spiritual kingdom among mankind : this could only be done by Providence, in the primitive councils of eternity. Therefore we see Luther, impelled by the spirit, and carried onward by the force of successive circumstances, rising gradually, and at length depriving the hierarchy of that spiritual realm which it had so long misruled. He is like a traveller on an acclivity, who is constantly ascending, because with every upward step the horizon expands, and the splendours of nature multifariously spread around him ; and, in this continuous progress of the Reformation, we see a fresh proof of its divine origin. Had human intellect planned it, human powers might have destroyed it. But all earthly influences were made to forward involuntarily the great work of regeneration ; and in course of time, the calculating policy of the princes promoted the diffusion of the evangelical creed as effectually as the folly and blindness of the popes. The only way for the latter to have met the storm which menaced them was, by placing themselves at the head of the reformers, as a Hildebrand would probably have done ; and in that case mankind might have reached the period of developed manhood by a more peaceable medium. But it would appear that, in the moral, as in the physical

world, perfection is attainable only through the strife of contending elements. In the history of mankind, we see all great successes secured by struggles; and even the gospel of peace was propagated by the sword. The opposition between catholicism and protestantism, and the contentions occasioned thereby, are in no sense misfortunes for mankind. Had protestantism become prevalent in Europe, to the total extinction of its rival creed, this victory (had no new opponent arisen) might have led to an insupportable self-assumption in human intellect, and eventually to a phariseeism in religion, which would have made mankind the victims of a barren, comfortless self-conceit. Had, on the other hand, catholicism succeeded in suppressing protestantism, the clergy would have held mankind through centuries in its trammels, and later times must have presented the spectacle of an Egyptian hierarchy, and a priestly mythology, in which freedom of thought and investigation would have been stifled. But it was otherwise decreed. By their mutual strife both have been benefited. Popery has lost its influence, and now exists only in empty form,—a monument of past and fallen grandeur. But catholicism, which must be distinguished from popery, still exists, as the representative of the infantine creed, and also of the youthful age of mankind. Protestantism elevates the reason, and thus becomes the representative of the manly age. Catholicism warns protestantism against

adoring reason as its sole divinity ;—thus the voice of Dryden :

“ Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,  
So reason to the soul ;—and as on high  
Those rolling fires *discover* but the sky,  
Not *light* us *here* ; so reason's glimm'ring ray  
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,  
But guide us upward to a better day.”

Protestantism cautions catholicism not to blind the eyes of faith, lest

—————man the truth  
With superstitions and traditions taint,

as your great poet exclaims, for whose inward eye beauty had revealed herself, whilst his mortal vision was dimmed by night. Both, then, catholicism and protestantism, tending to the same source, that of truth, will eventually meet and join in a reconciliation, which must lead to the perfection of mankind, when the one fold, or invisible church, shall have but one flock. No one can venture to express a hope as to when this period shall arrive. Centuries are but drops in the ocean of eternity; and I can conceive no stronger evidence of human vanity and pride, than when man loses all belief in the dignity of his nature, if he, the short-sighted mortal, do not enjoy, during the span of time allotted to him, those fruits, to the production of which the past and present have worked, and are working.

With the Reformation, or, in other words, with the development of reason, we see, then, mankind fully entered on the manly age. But such a transition could not take place quietly. Various are the passions which, at this period of life, tear the individual man, who is striving after truth; and European mankind were exposed to a similar struggle. But the fairest flowers are often unfolded by the storm; and, amid the agitations of the sixteenth century, Europe shows a rare assemblage of genius. Raphael and Luther were born in the same year: Shakspeare and Cervantes died on the same day. In Germany, the heart of Europe, where the strife commenced, the movement was more powerful than elsewhere. Scientific life, which had hitherto remained torpid under scholastic forms, now re-awakened with a zeal which ensured success. Faith, liberated by Luther, joined with reason; an union which, as we have above hinted, produced the perfect metamorphosis of the century. Luther himself, in whom both these mental faculties were so wonderfully combined, was the faithful representative of his period, which, uniting youthful enthusiasm with manly strength, formed the groundwork of the character of modern times.

It must, however, be admitted, that the state of mental cultivation in Germany, during the two hundred years succeeding the Reformation, by no means corresponded to that great act of religious emancipation, or even to the progressive improvement perceptible among other nations at the same period.

While sciences, and, above all, art and poetry, were unfolding themselves in unprecedented glory throughout Italy, Spain, England, and France, Germany lingered behind, as a tardy learner. It is true that protestantism stood forth as the representative of reason among the German people; but they resembled the patient, who, being restored to sight by a successful operation, incautiously exposes himself to a full and sudden glare, and thus retards his perfect cure. The confusion which followed Luther's death was turned to the best account by policy, which may be called the representative of self-interest. On the one hand the house of Austria, under the pretext of suppressing the unbelievers, was striving for monocracy; on the other, the German princes, ostensibly the defenders of rational faith and public freedom, were, in reality, employed in loosening the band that bound them to the republican system of the empire; the house of Habsburg having taught them to distinguish between their private interests and those of the imperial union.

Three great national calamities were consequent on the disastrous thirty years' war: namely, first, the independence of the German princes of the Empire, which empire thenceforth presented no one great idea, and of which the dissolution was in effect pronounced by the Westphalian treaty, though in mere form it existed for one hundred and fifty years after that peace; second, the immediate result of the just-named event, a dissolution of the national unity; and, last, the

interference of French diplomacy with the internal state of Germany,—an interference which had the most mischievous effect on the morals, manners, and language of the nation. Thenceforward, Germany was the arena where the continental nations fought their battles; and while German politicians were asserting their rights with the pen, the warriors of France cut the Gordian knot with the sword. The true national self-respect was not regained by the German people before the year 1813.

This political and moral state of the nation was intimately and constantly connected with its literary and mental culture; and the progress of civilization, retarded by continual warfare, was comparatively slow. From time to time, however, the voice of Poetry was heard; but it was too often weakened by the prevailing predilection for foreign models. The German poets of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and first half of the eighteenth century, were wanting neither in fancy nor in feeling, in depth of thought nor in acuteness of intellect, but generally deficient in taste. Since the middle of the last century, Germans have been striving for this standard of all true art. How far they may have succeeded, you yourselves, gentlemen, will be enabled to decide in the second term of my course on Literature, when we shall, together, investigate the productions of those great minds who have restored the glory of the German character in the eyes of other nations.

I need not particularly point out the progress of

civilization among the several nations of Europe. The entry of those nations into the age of manhood is obvious since the Reformation. From the beginning of our own century, reason has, throughout all Europe, raised its voice, loudly and powerfully, for political and religious freedom. There is no longer any dispute as to the validity of principles : the only difference now is with regard to the choice of means for the achievement of the great end. The southern nations of Europe, where catholicism, as the representative of the infantine creed and youthful age, is the ruling, have been hitherto unfortunate in their attempts, because the vehemence of youthful passion misled individuals to behold a harvest, where the fruit was only ripening. The northern nations, enjoying protestantism, the representative of reason and the manly age, have made no desultory efforts, but proceed in a smooth and easy way, without violent struggles, to the attainment of their object. The changes effected by them will probably be reforms, not revolutions.

Sciences, arts, literature, and industry, in all the branches of domestic life, are with them more or less progressing. Some of them, indeed, stride onward with gigantic step, surpassing the boldest expectations of the speculative philosophers of former times.

Each separate decade has furnished a mass of fresh discoveries, both in the field of science and in that of art and industry. The modern ballad-singer chants what the wise of former times did not dare to dream.

The human race has finally arrived at the full dignity of manhood. It feels its power, and exercises it against those who would make it retrace its steps. Mankind must tread an upward, not a downward, path, and those who refuse to ascend must stay behind alone and forlorn.

I have thus, in a general, and I trust a faithful, outline, traced the progress of mankind in its endeavours for the highest aim. I have not particularly considered its political, religious, or literary character, but have taken these collectively, because they all, more or less, stand in a close internal, though not always visible, connexion. History treats of all these points; but, as it considers them separately, it is divided into religious history, political history, and literary history. As we can know an individual but partially and imperfectly, if we be acquainted merely with his religious views and the mode of their acquisition, or with his conduct as a public citizen, or with his literary life, each without reference to the other; so every separate branch of history, as just mentioned, can only be regarded as a constituent part of the great whole; and cannot, of itself, form an independent whole. In this view, a history of the cultivation of mankind must always be but a division of the universal history of the world, and its object to describe the development of the mental faculties in poetry, science, and art. Such an enterprise would, however, be too gigantic; and when attempted, has invariably failed. The sphere chosen for the following course of

lectures is much more confined, and comprehends only a branch of the literary history of the German people; which I intend to treat somewhat in detail, when we come to the literature of the three last centuries. In order to show the connexion subsisting between the history of literature and the general progress of mental cultivation, it was necessary to give the general outlines just described; and I now propose to touch upon some topics, standing in close relation to the subject of the course of Lectures which is to follow.

Science and Art are forms by which the human mind represents the nature of its divine origin. The former is called into life through the activity of *intellect*; the latter, through that of *feeling* and *fancy*. Both, then, are subjects of the history of human cultivation, as far as this history shows the development and progress of the mind. Both, though by different ways, contend for truth as their highest aim. Science, by intellectual operation, either gives axioms to human reason as its inheritance, from which further truths may be derived—which is the *synthetical* method; or, it takes an opposite direction, and analyzes the existing appearances of its elements, tracing results to their primitive sources—which is the *analytical* method: and these different modes of searching after truth form, what is called, the *scientific* method. *Art*, on the contrary, is the representation of the innate ideas and intuitions of the human mind, by the power of *feeling* and *fancy*: a representation which may be

effected in a twofold manner; either by means of sounds and language, in the forms of music, oratory, or poetry; or by means of what is more strictly understood by *art*, in the forms of architecture, sculpture, and painting. In the field of science, intellect uses *logic* as a means of arriving at truth; in the field of art, *technical skill* is employed for expressing the internal perception and embodying the idea.

*Sciences*, then, belong to mankind generally, and have no particular country or nation, where they flourish in especial colours. There is not an English, French, Greek, or German science, because there is not an English, French, Greek, or German intellect, but a general *human intellect*. One science may, it is true, have made more striking progress among one people than another; yet this proves, not its national character, but merely its having been the exclusive object of attention with the distinguished men of such particular country. The mode of practically applying any science may impart to it a national interest, and in this sense we indeed speak of a Roman, French, or English law; yet this implies only the appropriation of peculiar laws to peculiar political and social wants; a remark which holds good also in theology, history, and the other sciences. Still this great principle remains incontrovertible, namely, that in all climes intellect must act by the self-same laws.

With *art*, however, the case is different. Art is a production of feeling and fancy, representing an intuitive idea; but this representation is connected

with some external accident, as sounds, or material forms. Now, as feelings and sentiments are variously expressed in various individuals, according to personal character; so the general character of many individuals, who form one people, will give a peculiar character to art among them. The sentiments of a southern will always be more vivacious than those of a northman. The same may be said of the fancy: its character is not general, but personal, and differs in different individuals; consequently, between aggregates of individuals, or, in other words, *nations*, its distinction is equally marked. Eastern fancy reflects images which are entirely different from those represented by the western; and a Spaniard's fancy varies as widely from that of a Swede. Fancy, as the daughter of nature, is subject to the influences of climate, manners, and customs; and though the eternal *idea* of the beautiful belongs to mankind generally, yet the *form* of its expression is always national; that is, every nation must give its particular character to the art which it cultivates. Man himself may be taken as the best illustration of this: every where, he is an image of the divinity, yet every where, this image is national;—a beautiful Greek differing essentially from a beauty of the north.

Religion, morals, customs, climate, and political constitution must, in every nation, have a decided influence on art. Speaking of the arts of design, I must assert, that the artist creates according to his peculiar perception of an idea. Thus, a Phidias will represent

the idea of Jupiter differently from a Praxiteles, though both may concur in their view and belief of the divine dignity of the Olympian father. Homer, again, delineates his Jove in a different form from that chosen by the northern skald, who sings of Odin; and this because the *ideas* of both differ concerning the Supreme Deity. We cannot, strictly speaking, compare the Venus of a Greek sculptor with the Madonña of Raphael; not only because that is a statue and this a painting, but because also the conceptions of both artists differ. Nay, we may go farther, and affirm that the works of the two great modern masters of sculpture, Thorwaldson and Canova, must differ in character, not only personally, but nationally; for Thorwaldson is a northman, Canova a southlander. A work of art is the offspring of the artist's intuition, a sort of internal revelation; for the idea of beauty must have been revealed to his mind previously to its representation; and this representation will be effected in an *individual* and *national manner*, because the feeling and fancy of the artist are subject to the influence of religious and political relations, and of the education, manners, and customs, which have formed their direction and cultivation.

Although a general *conception* of the beautiful be acknowledged to exist, still in no degree can we admit a general *representation* thereof. As long as the connexion between spirit and form endures, they must be influenced by climate, education, manners; and

therefore the representation of intuitive perceptions of the beautiful must nationally vary. A similar variety is found in the most sacred concern of the human race—the christian religion: in its leading truths, Christians of all sects and countries agree; but in the symbolic expression of it, and in the mode of penetrating to the source of truth, a great variety exists. *Feeling* and *fancy*, differing in the south from those in the north, differing also among the different nations, will variously clothe the eternal truths of revelation. Thus catholicism and protestantism have each their peculiar features; each, too, has for particular peoples a particular form, notwithstanding generally prescribed dogmas and professions of faith. And the cause of this lies, as we have seen, in the construction of the human mind, and in the divine order, that every where, in the universe, individuality and variety shall consist with uniformity.

By these rules, the art of poetry, which may be termed the mother of all art, must be judged. She represents the eternal ideas of beauty, by imbodying them in language, the eternal form of thought. The idea of beauty being an intuition, and not subject to the laws of demonstrative intellect, can only be conceived and felt; but *fancy*, as it were, lends it wings, by which it moves within the soul, and attempts to gain a form. Then, in order to be perceptible for others, it employs the power of language; and in the exercise of this power, in the giving outward form and life to the internal revelation, in making

the exterior form correspond harmoniously to the idea which is reflected in the soul, the poetical art consists. The idea of beauty may be dormant in the human mind, without man being able to give it a suitable form and life, either from a want of technical skill in adapting language to the internal tone of feeling, or because this instrument itself is inadequate to a perfect representation. Yet, however imperfect the instrument of language may be, still the idea of beauty, instinctively endeavouring to gain an external form, employs and gradually perfects the instrument; and in this view it is, that poets may be regarded as the creators and formers of a language. The expression is not born with the idea, but created by it; and the productiveness of the poet consists simply in the faculty of embodying and expressing his ideas in appropriate words. The perfection of his art, however, must depend partly on the *intrinsic worth* and *clear conception* of the ideas, and partly on the *harmonious form* of their expression.

We have admitted that the *idea* of beauty is eternal, and the same under the north pole as under the equator; but not so with the *expression* of the idea. The perception of the beautiful was conceived in a more dark and undetermined manner by the Egyptian, and his fancy was differently directed, from that of the elegant and graceful Greek. Feeling and fancy, which operate so importantly and vitally upon art, belong to the distinguishing peculiarities

of national character; and both these mental properties are prepared in that mysterious recess, from which the individual man receives his impulses and inclinations.

In the variety of that feeling and fancy the formation of separate peoples originated. We may suppose a primitive people, and at the same time a primitive language; but as nations variously formed their characters, various languages necessarily arose. Had the intellect been the sole agent in the formation of language, *one* would have sufficed for the mental wants of man; a truth, which is demonstrated by history. For, as we have above stated, the intellect is the productive element of science; and during a certain period of history this element employed but *one* language. Throughout the middle ages, nay, down to times more recent, *scientific* inquiries were carried on in the Latin language only.

Such an event, however, has never occurred in the field of poetic art. The individuality of a people, its dispositions and its wants, create a peculiar expression; so that each people possesses a language corresponding to its character, and consequently embodies its poetical conceptions therein. The art of poetry evidently consists in clothing fancy and feeling; and as these mental qualities are characteristically distinguished in every nation, they require a corresponding diversity of expression. And thus there never has been, nor ever can be, an universal language for the art of poetry. Nor can I join with

those, who regret that no general language can be found, or that the primitive one has been lost. Is not the language of nature herself diversified? Have not the lofty summits of the Cordilleras a different voice from that, which whispers round the hills of Albion? And is not the murmur of the rivulet a varying tone from the roaring of the sea? The sun, which scorches under the equator, also dissolves the polar ice: but his influence varies with the varying clime. The divine spirit pervading nature is every where the same, but its expression every where different. How insupportable would be the sameness of an uniform appearance in the visible face of things! It is *variety* that lends the perpetual and never-failing charm to nature, and also to the tongues of men. Like the eastern divinity, the genius of mankind reveals itself in a thousand changing forms; a thousand languages are so many sounds—tones of the divine in man: and the eternal vicissitude of forms and appearances, where the universe is mirrored in the smallest particles, as heaven is reflected in the human eye—this it is which constitutes the very character of the enigma of variety and uniformity in creation.

Furthermore, by this co-existence of various languages, the moral and spiritual life of nations is supported. Neither *there* is any uniformity—any rest; but eternal variety, motion, and change. Had mankind but one language, it would resemble a stagnant pool, which, undisturbed by streams or

storms, infects the air with fetid exhalations; and the poetic spirit must die away, because not free to move in various forms. The mutual effect of language and mind is eternal. In the endeavours of mind to acquire a perfect form in language,—if this form become torpid, and incapable of further growth and cultivation, then those great commotions occur, which create new forms, in which the mind is expressed. By the secret spell of language, a conqueror might probably gain a victory more complete than by the force of arms, could he introduce his language as the prevailing one among the vanquished people. And I think that a nation cannot be called really subjugated, till it have received the language of the victor. Happily, few examples of this kind are presented by history; while, on the other hand, it abounds with instances wherein the power of language has subjected the haughty conqueror to civilizing laws. Thus, Greece may be said to have vanquished Rome, when Mummius conquered Corinth, and the Roman hierarchy to have subdued the northern victors by the charms of the Roman language.

In modern times, language has been too long regarded as the product of accidental mechanism. The recent illustrations of *Grimm*, *von Humboldt*, and *Becker*, prove, not only the organization of language, but the possibility of tracing this organization to its primitive sources. And it now appears indisputable that language is the external representation of the interior and creative spirit, as the human body

is the visible form of the spiritual organization. The various languages, emanating from one primitive source, are now proved to extend, like the harmonious works of nature, in all directions. Thus, we not only observe the difference of distinct languages (which, it may be, form a general language, imperceptible for us, but intelligible to Him who understands all), but we also find particular languages diversified in themselves by provincial dialects; and even individuals possessing a peculiarity of language, expressive of their character, and varying at different periods of life and states of mind.

If, then, the language of a people be the form, embodying and expressing their spiritual life, this form must gain a peculiar cast, according to the various modes of mental cultivation; and thus to language may be applied, what Socrates said in another, though somewhat analogous, respect: "That in a beautiful body, a beautiful soul must dwell;" for, experience proves to us, that the character of a language is always a symbol of the spiritual life of a people; and the correspondence between culture and language may be traced to the minutest details. As connected with the object of these Lectures, I will here attempt a slight sketch of the general distinctive character, subsisting between the ancient, or classical, languages, and the modern; taking the Greek as the representative of the former, and the German of the latter. But before doing so, allow me to preface my remarks by a few words on Greek and Christian art.

All Greek art bears a plastic character; that is, all the forms of that art appear perfectly accomplished, by the mutual pervasion of *idea* and *execution*. It is *objective*, in as far as the ideas of the beautiful are expressed in clear and commensurate forms. Hence the Greeks are unrivalled in the, especially so called, plastic art, *sculpture*, in which the confines are distinctly determined. Their music, which was inseparably united to the art of poetry, had also this objective character. The highest purpose of Greek art was the harmonious execution of a clearly conceived idea; but their fancy was so governed and restrained by intellect, that they only conceived such ideas of art as seemed susceptible of perfect execution. When, for instance, Phidias forms the ambrosial locks of Jove, at the falling down of which, the summits of Olympus trembled, the idea, in the Greek sense, is a perfectly natural personification of power; and Phidias, we are told, executed it perfectly. The extreme point attainable by Greek fancy, the gods, they drew to the sphere of their own conception, with an unsurpassably creative power. They allegorized, but differently from the Hindoos or Egyptians. Human beauty was the highest attribute which they could imagine for their divinities; and thus they formed them after their own unrivalled living models. Venus was never more than the personified perfection of female beauty among the Greeks; and Jove, an almighty governor of men. That of which they could form no clear idea, they attempted not to

express by any image; for instance, the dark, inexorable Fate: this, in their poetry, appears, like the image of Sais, hidden by a veil, which the bard has never dared to lift for mortal eyes. The Greek world of art is a Pantheon, in which all the forms are seen in perfect clearness, because the light so falls on them, that each stands forth in its distinctly marked contours.

In the romantic, or, we may say, the *christian* art,—for its distinction from the classical is chiefly caused by the *christian* element,—we perceive a character different, nay, decidedly opposite, to that just mentioned. If we called the Greek art *plastic*, or *objective*, we may call the modern *ideal*, or *subjective*: not meaning by this that Greek art is deficient in *idea*, but that such idea was always perfectly expressed in the *form*, and pervaded the same. The character of *christian* art is quite distinct from that just described, as is the perspective in a rotunda from that in a Gothic cathedral; or the roof of a Greek temple from a Gothic steeple, pointing to the eternal sky. The *christian* creed opens the vista to eternity before the artist's view, and leaves him unrestrained by prescriptive forms: but Greek moderation limits his fancy by the boundaries within which, according to the Greek mythological creed, the ideal must be attained. Christian art has more the form of an infinitely rising spire: the Greek, that of a circle complete in itself. The former tends upwards with unceasing activity: the latter seeks

determined and intense repose. Christian art means more than it expresses: the Greek always finds a full expression for its idea. The heaven of the Greek artist is on the Grecian territory: that of the Christian lies beyond the boundaries of time and space. Hence, in christian art, we find the form always subservient to the idea; but in so far insufficient, that it points to an unknown and distant land of bliss. For the Greek, the palladium of art fell from Olympus: for the Christian, it has ascended to the regions of bliss, where he seeks it. It is true, that the beautiful is every where the same; but it is a sun, shedding various rays, and these rays prismatically playing in various hues. Venus appears a perfect beauty to the christian beholder, as well as to the heathen. To him, she is voluptuous, pleasing, and delightful; yet a christian beauty she certainly is not. To a pagan Greek, on the other hand, the Madonna of Raphael would appear beautiful; yet her celestial beauty he could not comprehend, till Christianity had removed the bandage from his eyes. Thus the character of christian art is, that the celestial is expressed by allusions; and its perfection must increase as it approaches its prototype. To this, of course, it can only distantly approach; keeping pace with the christian religion, which tends continually towards divine perfection, without man being able to attain it. I have introduced these few remarks on ancient and modern art, in order to throw a clearer

light on what I have to say concerning the Greek and German languages.

I must here recall to your recollection what I have already observed of language ; namely, that it is the organ of the mental life of a nation. Without going deeply into this matter, I would here indicate how an inquiry founded on this assertion might be pursued in all directions.

As, under the chisel of the Greek sculptor, the wonders of harmony and just proportion sprang forth, so from the lips of the Greek poet sounds proceeded, pure and clear as Grecian air, and, according to a rhythmical law, in close connexion with the art of music, flowed together in words, which by the fortunate division into vowels and consonants, and by the various labial and guttural, without any nasal, tones, formed a language the most euphonious ever heard by the human ear. In the Greek metrical structure, the law of harmony is founded on the simple principle, that double vowels, and vowels with double consonants, are always long, because requiring as much time again for pronunciation as single vowels in connexion with single consonants. This rule was equally perceptible for the eye and ear, and calculated to effect the greatest order and exactness in versification, particularly as, by the primitive mode, of singing the verses, their time and cadences were musically ruled. Thus the same distinct objectiveness was imparted to Greek poetry as to the arts of design. Now in all

modern European languages, and especially in the German, of which we have now to speak, the syllables are measured by a very different law, emanating from the subjective character. It is not the offensive doubling or agglomeration of consonants, which determines the syllabic quantity, but the intrinsic value, the sense in which words are put, and the original root.

In German, especially, the radical syllable gives the tone; and herein the romantic character of our modern poetical language is visible. It is not the external form of the word, nor the law of a previously acknowledged and prescribed rhythmus, but the subjective nature of the word, the place, which it occupies as the representative of a spiritual idea, that determines its importance and its sound. Thus, the euphony of a word is, if I may so say, determined by its mental music. As a sort of compensation for the absence of the objective value of Greek metre, the romantic languages possess *alliterations*, *assonances*, and *rhymes*. Modern languages, however, want the power of forming *hexameters*, *pentameters*, and the *ode measure*, as found in Pindar; and even the German language, though unusually tractable, cannot, I fear, in this respect, fully satisfy a classically trained ear.

Thus we see that the organization of the classical languages, as well as that of the modern, corresponds to the characters above defined, as classical and modern. We now proceed to an inquiry which has long per-

plexed the critics; namely, whether nationality in art and poetry be a desirable object or not. During centuries, classical antiquity has furnished such undisputed models in science and art, that in some countries (as in France for instance) modern culture has lost in a great measure its own ground, by the attempts to give it the external impress of the classical, though it was impossible to derive it from those mysterious sources, from which the classical culture flowed.

I have above designated the characteristic of Greek art as *plastic*, or *objective*. I stated that feeling and fancy, guided by intellect, had created the form; yet it should be remembered, that religious conceptions and intuitions, that the mythology of the ancients, pointed out to art the field for its exertion. As the characteristics of modern or romantic art, I pointed out its tendency towards the infinite, its longing for the unearthly, and also (which is the special characteristic of German culture) a profound self-searching of the mind—an inquiry into the unexplorable depths of the soul. In this view, I termed romantic art *subjective*, and showed that religious ideas had determined the character of the art. It would, however, be wrong to take the christian element as the sole criterion of romantic art; for, if we inquire into the character of that old northern art, which pervades the gloom of early northern history, the romantic character occurs to us, though in a pagan form. In the northern mythology we find the tendency towards

something indistinct and undefined. While, with the Greek, the mental horizon of mankind is bounded by an inexorable *fate*, which thus confines both gods and men for ever—with the old Northmen, on the contrary, the world of gods and men dissolves, as it were, into a novel and non-descript state of being, by the embrace of the Almighty Father. In this romantic element of northern mythology may be found the cause why Christianity was so easily imparted to the northern pagans. This mythology served as a sort of school, preparatory to the reception of the christian faith, which conducted the people into a new world, yet to one where they beheld the well-remembered forms which fancy had created in their mythological belief. The idea of an Almighty God, who on earth and in heaven reconciles all conflicting elements into one harmonious whole, was represented in their *Allfather*, who, indeed, like the Eleusinian sun, shone mysteriously and incomprehensibly to every mortal eye. Their *bright god*, Baldur—god of spotless purity, who loses his life at the instigation of the evil one, Locke, but at the end of time reigns in eternal bliss—was easily changed for the Christian Saviour, whom they called the *white Christ*. The apostles of Christianity in the north availed themselves of these analogies, in order to adapt the christian doctrine to the previous notions of the natives; and in the commencement tolerated many awkward applications of pagan mythology to christian tenets, that they might the

sooner bring those stubborn minds beneath the yoke of love.

Thus it would appear, that, for the greater part, the character of the romantic culture can only be explained by the peculiar character of the northern people, and that Christianity inculcated a new and fresh element, the object of which was to restore the extinct mental powers of Romans, Greeks, and Celts. Beneficent as the waters of the overflowing Nile, the stream of migration from the north and north-east poured over the dry and barren plains of human kind. The first rushings were indeed destructive ; but how fair a field of spring-life and of beauty appears in the middle ages, succeeding this inundation ! Without these northern co-operators, with their physical and moral force, Christianity would scarcely have restored the enervated human race.. It is, then, this mixture of the powerful northern elements with the more feeble and fanciful southern ; the influence exercised on this combination by the christian doctrine, and the effect of Arabian fancy on European life and poetry, which, together, constitute the character of a romantic art, prismatically diverging in various hues, subject to a thousand influences, visible and invisible, arising from national character and destiny, from religion, and even from climate.

It is surprising why, in modern times, the classical culture of the ancient Greeks should be laid down as the sole rule for an artist's labours ; for, it must be clear to every one, that the classical character of the

antique cannot possibly be transplanted to the romantic field of modern national life. In the moral, as in the physical world, there is perpetual vicissitude; no day is like another, nor can that, which once was, ever reappear the same. In vain do we long for a return to childhood's days,—*fugit irreparabile tempus*. We have *fancy* and *memory* to beguile us with delightful dreams. Classical antiquity appears to us like a beautiful and glowing boy; and we, led by history, dream ourselves back to this time, but to live it, is beyond our power. The lament for the vanishing of this beautiful time is censurable, as it shows a feeble diffidence in our own ability to attain an aim as beautiful, though different. Whither such a tendency to adapt the culture of another people leads, we see in the state of art among the Romans. It was no plant indigenous to the Roman soil, but transplanted, with infinite care, from that of Greece. Yet what, after all, is the Roman culture? Had Roman poetry been suffered to form itself on the native and heroic mythology, it would, in all probability, have tamed the wild and sanguinary spirit of the people. But the Roman poets, being copyists of the Greeks in form and in substance, had, and could have, no influence on the popular mind and manners, because their language found no echo in the popular breast. The oldest Roman poets were slavish imitators, and their art remained in perpetual bondage to the Greek. The poetic life of the Romans, always dry and barren, became more so, as the public luxury and profligacy increased. The old heroic songs, of

which Cicero makes Cato speak, and which, like those of the northern skalds, were sung to music at the public feasts, had vanished before the tinklings of Grecian singing poets, who were unintelligible to the people, because their poetical conceptions arose not out of popular life and feelings. These poets wrote for the court, for Augustus and Mæcenas, and not for the people ; yet a poetry in which the popular life and character is not reflected is unworthy of the name. The Romans were thus, not the creators of their own forms of art on Greek models, but merely servile copyists, and their productions, compared with those of the Greeks, are as plaster casts, to splendid originals.

I take this opportunity of stating how far I acknowledge imitation as a means of arriving at genuine art, and I cannot do better than to quote the opinion of Schlegel and Schelling, in which I perfectly coincide. These distinguished critics say, that an artist ought to *imitate*,—“ that is, *create* after a model, and not *copy* him ; the true imitation of an artist being to act on the same principles, and in the same spirit, as other great masters have done before him.” According to this definition, the *creative* power of an artist remains untouched. He creates according to the given laws of harmony, which his original has followed ; and in this sense nature was the great model for the immortal masters of Grecian art. They embodied their ideal according to the operative laws of nature ; and, in this respect, Greek culture proceeds by the same degrees of development as nature herself.

The beginnings of Greek art were very imperfect. How great is the distance between the representation of the three Graces, by three long and smooth stone blocks, without limbs, and the completion of the Phidian Jove! Thus nature proceeds through her various works, till she arrives at the wonder of creation—man. Through what numberless degrees of formation does she not pass, from the unorganized pebble, to this perfect and unsurpassable organization! If, then, we admit that art must act in the same manner as the creative spirit of nature,—that is, that each form must be organized according to the ideas of beauty conceived by the artist,—we see that the external form of beauty can only grow out of the artist's observance of the perfect harmony between form and idea. Here no laws, no lines of beauty, can be given; the entire process is a secret, of which genius, itself, first becomes conscious during the representation. The Greeks had no models before them; why then have they been enabled to create models for us? Because they listened at the threshold of nature, and creatively showed forth her inspiration. They strove to represent the idea within them, and in this continual endeavour to express the conception in the substance, the masterpiece was at length achieved. Their art then, as the representation of their own beautiful Greek life, is certainly national. We will not here stop to inquire how closely this is connected with the freedom of their political institutions, the object of which was to secure the perfect

harmony between body and mind ; and to this object their public assemblies, feasts, national games, and religious festivals, were all directed. The character of Greek art has a peculiar charm, and unattained by any other people. In vain would you point to the works of Rome, from Augustus to the Antonini, since they were formed either by Greek artists or by Romans, who had studied in Greece, and had there resigned their native character, so that the specimens in question belong more properly to Greek than to Roman art.

The result of what we have before said concerning the nationality of art is, that this nationality is the individual conception belonging to a people, and its just representation of the ideas of the beautiful. So considered, national character is analogous to the personal character of an individual ; that is to say, as the individual in his words and actions, in his scientific and aesthetical creations, has, besides his idea of the morally good and the aesthetically beautiful, an expression of his own personal character and disposition of mind, as the mark of his mental peculiarity, with which no other can be the same, though similar ; so art, if genuine, and if not merely servile copying, will bear the characteristic impress of the people among whom it appears : and thus true poetry, as one branch of art, must always reflect the popular character ; that is, it must be *national*. I have already designated modern art, as it formed itself in the western nations after the destruction of the

Roman empire, and has continued with unremitting progress to our own times, by the general name of *romantic*, as describing its peculiar character. We must not, however, lose sight of the fact, that this romantic art, in progress of time, has represented itself in various national colours. The different literatures of the European peoples developed themselves, in proportion as the various European languages gradually gained a determined form, by the separation of the peculiar characters of those peoples, which now, through the higher band of culture and civilization, are combined into one European federative union, however much political prejudice and selfish policy may counteract this lofty purpose. The character of art, during the middle ages, is generally of one tone and colour, though the different shades are perceptible therein; and in like manner we see, in the boy and in the youth, a greater generality and resemblance of characteristic features: the personal character is certainly evinced in the inclinations and amusements of youth, but that character wants determination and individuality, which is fully displayed first in *man*. In European mankind, awakened to perfect manhood after the reformation, this individual character of the different peoples appears fully delineated. If we take under one view the national features of art in different countries, it seems that they are invariably and unavoidably consequent on the condition of human nature in those countries. As, in history, an Alexander, or a Charlemagne, can only once appear,

so a Greek, a German, or an English language and art, can be found but once. Those who have contended that one eternal art and science exists for all times and peoples, confound the principle of there being but *one idea*, as the source of all art, namely, that of beauty, manifested (as Plato says) by God to the mind of man : this they confound with the *execution* or *representation* thereof. Human intellect we have above taken as the creative element of science, entering upon various subjects, but always by the same path, and hence we deduced that science had, not a national, but an universal character. But poetry, the offspring of feeling and fancy, and religious intuition, appears in changeful hues, according to the variance of those qualities in nations and individuals. Hence the variety of mythology, in the mysterious gloom of which the origin of every people is veiled. It is true that the various mythological creeds of almost all nations, whose history has been transmitted to us, spring from one common source,—an antehistorical revelation ; but their *clothing*—the *exterior form* given to them by poetry—differs in the different peoples, and loses the common character, as the nation deviates from the primitive religious belief and individualizes itself.

We thus endeavoured to determine the limits of art, and to come to an understanding of its character, in contradistinction to that of science ; and having found, in feeling and fancy, the qualities of the human mind, by which the idea of the beautiful attempts to

acquire *form*, it must appear obvious that *activity* is an innate property of feeling and fancy, which do not lie dormant in the human breast, but live and express their life, in the attempt to gain the form of beauty.

All this would seem to be sufficiently clear, for few would undertake to dispute the propriety of our considering feeling and fancy, as the agents by which art is compelled into a visible form. But there is a point which we have not yet touched,—one also which is the principal element of all art, its very innermost and essential being. I mean that *idea of the beautiful* of which I have frequently spoken in the foregoing lectures, without, however, defining what I understood thereby. This “idea of the beautiful” is, in fact, the nucleus of the whole inquiry; for as *man* is the *identity* of body and soul, so *art* seems to be the *identity* of idea and form. You can understand nothing of the form, unless acquainted with the idea. But, gentlemen, from time immemorial philosophers have been much perplexed in their attempts to describe and define the nature of the soul, and no less so, that of beauty. Now, it would be assumption in me to attempt the decision of a point, upon which men of immortal genius have disagreed. Few philosophers are to be named, who have not touched the subject. Mr. von Schlegel, so renowned in England for his profound philosophical and critical powers, and for his extensive erudition, enumerated, during his lectures, delivered at Berlin, on the Theory and History of the Arts of

Design, the greater part of those philosophers, who have declared their views on the nature of the beautiful. Among them we find mentioned Plato and Aristotle, Locke and Leibnitz ; the French empyrists, Helvetius, Diderot, Cabanis, and D'Alembert ; Burke, Hemsterhuis, and Kant, the ingenious and profound Winkelmann, all of whom have more or less explicitly investigated the nature of the beautiful. From a consideration of the opinions of all the philosophers, enumerated by Mr. von Schlegel, it would appear that Plato far surpasses his fellow-labourers in the field of speculative philosophy, as to the exalted idea which he entertained of the beautiful. He makes no attempt at definition :—he speaks of the beautiful by similes only. He calls it the reflex in the visible world, which excites in the soul a longing after the divine as after its source. Let us, then, rest satisfied with this view of the matter, and regard and venerate the beautiful, as an internal revealing, a spark of the divine in man, which prompts him to give a visible and material form to the image that is within him. We can thus dispense with the definition of Aristotle, who says that “the beautiful pleases for its own sake, and is praised because it pleases,” though this definition, or rather explanation, is indeed applicable to the idea of the beautiful. We will rather listen to the voice of a genius, who understands the opinion of Plato, better than I can hope to do. This is Goethe, who, in his “Wilhelm Meister,” says : “Beauty creates the thoughts of the soul, as though

they were a harmony of colours; its sentiments, as an unison of all tones; its life, as a melodious song, which soothes all sorrows, softens all passions, vivifies pale fear, crowns all love, fills all space, cures all wounds; or, as a lovely image created by God, as if he would copy himself, and for that purpose took the elements of the human world. There is nothing more beautiful than a soul which, without poetically composing works, forms within itself and creates in itself the beautiful. The beautiful unites all contrasts. The pure man, glowing with patriotism, desires to die the death of unostentatious sacrifice,—and he also desires to seat himself calmly with the Sacontala among the lotus flowers, beside the Ganges, —both, because it is beautiful. He longs to wander in freedom afar off—in the rustling alpine forests—in the orient tinged with the colours of Aurora—in all the lovely places of the earth,—and like a child, in his restriction of home, he wishes likewise the abode in every lovely spot—both, because it is beautiful. Thus the truly mindful man, modest as brave, mild as powerful, in the bloom of youth, or decline of age, filled with hopes or memories, chooses for himself one ideal, which in a hundred forms reveals itself, like Brahma, as *one*, as the *divine*, in the image of the beautiful."

And in another passage :

" In 'the beautiful,' the divine speaks by images, has clothed itself as the human mind, and has acquired form, as the thought in the word. And the wise con-

ceive in it the Eternal, and revere it as religion in terrestrial form."

The divine, then—that is, *truth*—is the source of the *beautiful*; but it is also admitted by all to be the source of the *moral*—the *good*. Consequently, the beautiful and the good are only pulses, or vibrations, if I may so say, of one idea. The *good* appears in *deeds*—the *beautiful*, in *forms*. Hence the former, in its expression, is eternal; good deeds being written in the book of life: the latter, perishable; that is, as regards the *form*; but the *idea* is eternal, as is also the *act*, though not the *work*.

Gentlemen, If I have been so fortunate as to make myself clearly understood, you will have perceived the close relation between art, in its highest sense, and religion. Religion is the belief in, and the longing after, the sources of truth. It moves the soul to act. The will is followed by a deed. Virtue is evinced by good actions; which are the result of religious feelings and persuasions. *Art* is humbly and faithfully subservient to her elder sister. Songs are its first expression. The first poets are *priests*: the premises of poetry, in all nations, *epic songs*, celebrating the deeds of gods, as fancy and feeling prompted the poet. Then follow the arts of design; but mythology is always their object. The image represents the idea: but when the idea is lost, or forgotten, the image becomes either hieroglyphic, or an *idol*; as, when the spirit quits the body, death

ensues ; the body either falling into dust, or becoming a mummy, or petrified. Religion, like art, has her earthly and perishable form. In order to captivate the senses by the means of fancy, she avails herself of ceremonies, worldly institutions, and rituals : but we must bear in mind, that she is heaven-descended, and dwells on earth to point out the celestial path to men. With time, these forms and ceremonies change. The works of art, which lend to her an earthly charm, perish also : but the eternal ideas live in the memory of man ; and this, in truth, is immortality. Phidias is immortalized by his works, although no trace of them be now discoverable. Raphael, long after his divine paintings shall have perished, will be gratefully remembered, when the names of contemporaneous heroes have passed away. The more the beautiful has of the lofty in it, the more does it receive a religious colouring.

This nature, in its sublime variety, is religiously enjoyed by us through poetry and devotion, if our reflection embrace it, as the representative form of the idea of the beautiful, organized according to the laws of symmetry and harmony.

The artist works religiously, if, when imitating and copying nature, the idea of beauty within him generates the form organically.

We see, then, that religious feeling is the source of all art : and hence we find it, in the highest stage of its perfection, invariably devoted to the religious belief of the age. The symbolical part of religion—

that is, the formal expression of the eternal truths, as conceived by mortal man—comes within the special province of the artist: an opinion which is borne out by the ancient and modern history of art and literature.

The objection that art, even in its most perfect state, is often intent on creating for worldly purposes alone, and that this is especially the case in modern times, does not at all contradict my assertion. In every flower and tree, the artist beholds an image of the divine. Truth and beauty are his aim on all occasions; and religious and worldly art are merely different forms of the same idea. The mode of accomplishing an idea must vary with the individuality of man, and the nationality of peoples.

The objects of art are various as those of nature; and they are traceable to the self-same source. Modern times, when reason rules the feeling, and checks the wanton flight of fancy, have given to art a more philosophical tendency. What the artist formerly achieved by a sort of inspiration, he now endeavours to accomplish by reflection. This often stamps modern works with the impress of labour and jejuneness: but *reason*, in itself, is not the cause of this, which proceeds only from a misapplying of reflection. Inspiration and reason form no contrast. To both belongs consciousness of the laws of harmony; and this consciousness, and that of the mutual pervasion of idea and form, are indispensable requisites in the mind of an artist.

After having ascertained the idea of the beautiful, as the vital principle of all art, which, by the agency of feeling and fancy, is vivified into form, it will be now our object to consider this *form* more closely. This may be done in a twofold manner: either by reviewing the different branches of art, which originate in the peculiarity of the *material* employed for creating the form, as, for instance, poetry and music, and the arts of design; or, by fixing our attention on the style, that is, the characteristic mode in which the work of art speaks to the attentive observer.

In order not to be misled in the mazes of speculation, to which the consideration of the points immediately connected with our subject might lead, I shall content myself by offering some general observations on the style of *poetry*.

Poetry, as well as every other branch of art, speaks to us in three different *tones*, or *styles*—the *epic*, the *lyrical*, and the *dramatic*. One of these three must predominate in every poem, though always more or less mixed with the others. This division must not be regarded as an invention of criticism; nay, it would seem to be an absolute necessity which thus classes the three chief dispositions of the human mind, by which it is prompted to activity; dispositions, by the influence of which, the artist, or the poet, expresses the idea of the beautiful in three different ways, or forms. In acknowledging this division into the epic, lyrical, and dramatic styles, we dismiss all further divisions, as unimportant, since

they are mere technical forms, and, as such, having no essential connexion with the mind.

The character of the epos is grand repose in activity. It is the narration of actions, forming one grand picture, where all the different agents are performers in one great action. Take, for example, the most complete epos—the Iliad, and it corroborates this definition of the epic character. The epos represents the life of man as it appears in action ; not describing the conflict of passions within the breast of the hero, nor his sentiments, nor, in fine, his *subjective*, but his *objective* life. Objectiveness is then the end of the epic poet, and he impresses his work with the objective character.

The epic poet relates the achievements of his heroes : he delineates their life as it appears in their actions. It is not one picture that he presents to you, but a collection of pictures, linked together into one chain by the poetical skill of the master, and exciting in you that kind of illusion, which is produced by a panoramic representation. Amidst all the bustle of active life—amid the variety of episodes which carry your mind through all the changes of internal emotion, still, however, the final result of the perusal of an epos is *repose*, produced by the pervading idea of the whole. To the epic character, as here described, sculpture will be found to correspond.

If we have found the character of epic poetry to be that of repose in activity, we must now define

that of lyrical poetry to be *emotion* in sentiment. The lyrical poet relates not actions; he celebrates not the deeds of men, representing the action, as it were, before your eyes: but he sings his feelings and his sentiments, and describes his own internal life, as resulting from the present moment. Every thing around him, he draws within the magic circle of his subjective intuition. While fancy assists the epic poet to celebrate the actions of men, as in conflict with each other, the lyrical poet brings these actions and the objects around him, working upon him, in relation with his feelings, which, thus affected, he sings; and his song rushes forward like “a hastening bark, with expanded sails,” as Pindar expresses it. The character of lyrical poetry is, consequently, of a *subjective* nature.

In music, the lyrical is the prevailing element.

Now, the dramatic art has an object and character different from the two preceding forms. It combines, as it were, the subjective and objective, representing, unitedly, the *repose in action*, and *emotion in sentiment*. The dramatist sketches the leading features of the life of an individual—the hero of the piece—to whom the other persons are only as accessory bystanders, and able implements for the performance of the great action. The exploits of the hero—either his struggle against inexorable fate, or his conflict with cabal and intrigue, or the accomplishment of a virtuous act—are delineated; but, at the same time, his inward strife, his sentiments and feelings,

as the motives of his actions, are laid open. It is the individual character, the personality of man, which is sketched, both in the subjective and objective nature; while, in the epos, the *actions*, and, in lyrical song, the *feelings*, of an individual, are portrayed.

In the drama, the epic element is seen in action, the lyrical in sentiment and feeling; and the mutual pervasion of both these elements produces the drama. The drama corresponds to the art of painting.

Applying the character of the three forms of poetry, as we have delineated them, to the progressive life of an individual man, or of mankind generally, we arrive at the following results :

Childhood is the epic age. A child clothes the images of its feelings and ideas, of its experiences and observations, in simple tales and stories, they being, of course, the only literary aliment which it relishes. It delights in activity.

Youth is the lyrical age : a longing after something unknown ; the violence of sentiments and passions, prompt to lyrical effusion. The youth will speak to you of his inward feelings, for it is the want of his nature, or he will sing them ; while the child, by gestures and actions, shows what is passing before the inward mirror of his soul. Love awakens in the youth, and impels him to exertion more wonderful and extravagant, than he himself could have conceived. Restlessness is his characteristic ; hence his sensuality, and consequent extravagance.

The manly age has the dramatic stamp ; rejoicing

in active deeds, and in reflection. Man has now reached the summit of individuality. His acts are not involuntary and unconscious, as those of the child, nor the heedless bursts of passion, as those of the youth. Reason has now awakened within him in all her power; by the influence of which, activity and contemplation, sentiment and action, are in mutual co-operation. His character is formed; it is the union of personality and universality. At the head of his family he rules as a king; as a citizen he is obedient to the law, but it is on personal dignity that his exertions for the commonwealth are founded. Subjectiveness and objectiveness are, with him, in mutual harmony.

A retrospect of the general history of literature shows these three forms of poetry, not only occurring in the three great periods of the history of mankind —childhood, the epic age; youth, the lyrical; and manhood, the dramatic; but also in the literary history of every nation, these three forms may be traced more minutely, and in detail. This I wish to explain.

In the poetry of the Hindoos, Israelites and Greeks, the epic element is the prevailing: in that of the nations of the middle ages, the Northmen and Germans, the lyrical predominates. Hardly was the Reformation completed in Europe, when we see Shakspeare and Calderon (of whom we shall speak hereafter) stand forth, as the fathers of the modern drama, and the

representatives of the dramatic character of modern times.

Let us now glance at the poetry of the just-named nations. The earliest poetry of the Hindoos was epic. The fragments of the Mahabharata, a celebrated Indian poem, are epic episodes, and a learned colleague of mine, the professor of Oriental literature, infers that the poem itself is an epos. It is, like almost all Hindoo poetry, of a religious character. The infantine character, as the smiling of the babe on beholding the cheerful nature around him is clearly visible; but that *repose* which distinctively characterizes the Greek epos is yet imperfectly developed. The contemplation of the Deity, as expressed by allegories, is the ruling feature of Indian poetry. Even with the Hindoos, lyrical poetry seems to have proceeded from the epic. The Meghaduta of Kalidasas and Ghatakarpam seem to be of more recent date, and the Indian epos contains, as Dr. Rosen observes in one of his reviews, the element which, in later times, took the dramatic form.

In the literature of the Israelites, this epic character is likewise preponderating. The Pentateuch, at least the first book, and the greater part of the second, is a grand epos of the loftiest character, in the style in which a child would speak of the exploits of his ancestors—of the love, and of the anger of his father. The character of objectiveness

is everywhere apparent. The descriptions of the plagues in Egypt; of the passage through the Red Sea; of the journey through the deserts; are all related in the highest epic style—the whole being overspread with activity, and as much calmness, as the ungovernable spirit of the people will admit. Having, on a former occasion, said, that the character of the Jewish poetry had a lyrical shade, I may be supposed to have thereby advanced something contradictory to my present assertion of the universal tendency to the epic form, in the poetry of the ancients; but I wish it to be understood, that my former expression applied only to the overflow of strong and passionate warmth, which every where breaks forth. The Old Testament thus appears as an epos, composed of numberless episodes. One great idea of conscious dependence on the Almighty Father, who most severely chastises the child whom he most loves, pervades the books of the Old Testament, from beginning to end.

The lyrical poetry of the Jews finds its brightest development during the middle age of the Israelites—I allude to the period between David and the prophets. In their modern time, that is, since their return from Babylon, the dramatic character is strongly expressed, in the book of Maccabees. How strikingly drawn are not the characters of the three Maccabean heroes, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon; as also, that of the old Matathias, by the author, whosoever he may have been.

Now, gentlemen, with the Greeks, the *epos* is the beginning of their poetry, as far as can be proved by the relics of their literature, but it is also the keystone of that magnificent structure—Grecian art. Repose in activity, the most perspicuous objectiveness, is its striking peculiarity. Action is linked to action,—the highest variety, with the most harmonious uniformity. The *Iliad* of Homer must remain a poetic wonder for all futurity—it cannot be surpassed—nay, it cannot be equalled; for the time once gone returns no more; and Grecian life can never reappear, because the spirit of the time is different. Homer's *Iliad* is a prospective historical picture of the Greek people. The lyrical poetry forming the transition to the dramatic, and of which Pindar was the representative, is not wanting in epic colour. The poet everywhere, even in his dithyrambics, in his highest flight remains objective, and, if I may so say, plastic. Still more striking is the appearance of the epic colour in the Greek dramas, the last and most elevated stage of Greek poetry. By the drama, I have here especially Greek tragedy in view. Here we certainly find the essential requisite for dramatic art, repose in action, movement in passion and feeling, as above mentioned; but the epic element by much predominates. The character of the Grecian hero is indeed delineated—but how? He appears moving majestically onward. It is not, separately, the heroism or virtue of his deeds or senti-

ments, which excites the reader's interest ; but it is the general expression caused by his lofty bearing ; his fear and reverence of gods and fate ; the pride and dignity, with which he meets his destiny. It is this, as it is often rightly called, plastic character, which is the epic element, distinguishing the hero of the Greek drama. Every thing here appears rather in the light of one grand action, worked in marble as by the magic of the chisel. Majestic repose is the charm of the tragic muse of Greece. On the Greek stage you find not the bustle and restlessness caused by the number of personages employed in the modern drama, each of whom is the representative of some striking passion, which, by its contraposition to the chief character in the piece, serves to strengthen and heighten the effect of that character. The Greek chorus appears as one person, with a warning, foreboding, exciting, or soothing voice. The Greek hero seems in conflict, not with men, but with gods—with fate itself. His fall has something fearful : it excites less compassion, than deep awe. As Brutus says, “ He is carved, a dish fit for the gods.”

Of the Romans I have but little to say, since they certainly possessed no national poetry, in a cultivated form. Their poetry was of Greek origin, and retained in its character so much of the Grecian element, that I must abstain from any conclusions in regard to it, as bearing on the analogy under consideration.

The literary history of the northern nations evinces the same development of the three forms of poetry.

The oldest mythological relic of the Northmen is the epico-lyrical song of Vala, which relates the origin of the universe, the combat and downfall of the gods of Valhalla. The remaining mythological compositions, contained in the ancient, or Sæmund's *Edda*, are epic songs, in which, however, the lyrical tendency is vividly expressed. When Christianity expelled the heathen deities of Valhalla, the epic element was preserved solely in the old popular ballads; and it was not till the seventeenth century that Scandinavian literature gave signs of any dramatic power.

We know but little of the earliest songs of the Germanic tribes. It is related by credible historians that Charlemagne ordered a collection of the old popular songs; perhaps those mentioned by Tacitus, as serving the people for memorials and annals, celebrating the origin of their gods and ancestors. The *Barditus*, of which he speaks, seems to have been the dawn of German lyrical poetry. The collection made by order of Charlemagne is lost; but four hundred years later we see the lyrical poetry flourishing in the brightest colours. Christianity had unveiled the inward eye, which looks into the heart. The romantic character, of which we have already spoken, developed itself. Honour, faith, and love, were the wings of the poetry of the troubadours, minstrels, and of the minne-singers. Woman, disregarded by the Greek, at least as to her individuality, now became the object of an almost sacred reverence, and was reinstated in that place, which,

by the order of nature, she is destined to occupy. European mankind seemed anxious to make to the fair an ample compensation for the neglect of the olden time, and to restore to them those rights which were apparently lost, especially among the Eastern nations.

The epic songs of the middle ages may be all said to have a lyrical tinge. The commencement of a dramatic art shone faintly forth in the rude form of religious shows, generally represented by monks, and called "Mysteries."

The Reformation, which, as we have seen, caused the full awakening of reason, and thus the moral regeneration of mankind, gave to modern times the dramatic tendency. Nations appear on the field of history in highly developed individuality: freedom being the prevailing sentiment, which everywhere impels them to action. In vain would you seek in this period for the epic repose of the ancients. Lyrical enthusiasm, regulated by reason, is the ruling element in the dramatic character of modern times. In the poetry of distinct nations we meet with the same appearances. In Spain and in England, the dramatic art first attained its perfection. The Italians gave their grand epics a dramatic shade, until Alfieri appeared and created a national drama.

The French made a mighty advance, when the creative power of Corneille and Racine called their drama into existence; but it was frozen within the three unities of Aristotle. They wished to copy the

ancients ; but succeeded only in the *form*. The grace, the harmony, the calmness of tragical character, and the wonderful melody of the Greek language, they could not imitate.

My countrymen of modern times have long laboured in the dramatic field, with but indifferent success. I shall have occasion to show you some specimens of tragedy-writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ayrer, Gryphius, Lohenstein, and others. At length Lessing showed the way to more laudable exertion, and Schiller, Goethe, and Heinrich von Kleist have followed him. Since these celebrated authors, Germany has beheld the ranks of dramatists thicken rapidly, and at present she possesses a numerous host of playwrights ; but are they all able hands ? Ludwig Tieck thinks not, and he is the best German critic, since A. W. von Schlegel has resigned that office.

In modern times have appeared two standard-bearers, round whom a swarm of imitators have gathered, and are gathering still. They both, jointly, represent the character of romantic art, as described in the foregoing pages : and each of them is also the distinct representative of one strongly-marked feature of modern times. Calderon, the representative of Catholicism, in its form of the infantine creed, and of youthful strength ; Shakspeare, that of Protestantism, as the form of reason and the manly age. In both, the subjective character of modern art, individuality and subjectiveness, are strongly deline-

ated ; but, while the former embraces the idea of the beautiful, with religious enthusiasm, the latter, with philosophic depth, unveils the mysteries of the human breast.

While, in Calderon, a glowing fancy transports you beyond the bounds of history, and makes you forget the miseries of the present, Shakspeare, everywhere, by the force of his poetical reasoning, by the power of his psychological perceptions, and by the charms of a Proteus-like diction, places history before you, reconciling the past and the present. He dives into your own heart, reveals to you its mysteries : he predicts, with apodictical certainty, its hopes and fears. Both poets are sentimental, for sentiment is a characteristic feature of Christian art : but the Spaniard is so, like a youth bursting forth into passionate rapture : the Briton, like a man, who, suppressing his tears, conquering his sorrows, and bridling his passions, shows his victory, in proportion as his moral and mental strength is evinced. While the former captivates you by his imagery, the latter convinces you by incontrovertible reasoning.

Thus comprising the results of all which I have said, in the preceding pages, under one view, we arrive at this truth ;

The history of the human race has a two-fold appearance—the inward, or *esoteric*, which comprises the development of human cultivation,—and the outward, or *exoteric*, embracing the successive series of human actions and events. Both these stand in or-

ganical connexion, the one explaining and elucidating the other; and both have their common degrees, stages, and epochs, which I have endeavoured to trace, as distinctly as the pressure of time would permit.

The history of the human mind, the consciousness of our divine nature, and the experience of daily life, all show that we possess innate ideas, from which the idea of the beautiful, through the agency of feeling and fancy, produces the work of art. Art, as the organical and mutual pervasion of idea and form, has a threefold style, analogous to the three great epochs conspicuous in history; and this style, as the effect of feeling and fancy, we have seen shadowed forth, not only in the history of mankind, but in that of every single nation—nay in the biography of the individual man. Thus the history of art—and that of one branch of it—poetry, stand in immediate connexion with universal history.

And herein, gentlemen, we have fixed the point of view from which to consider the history of German poetry since the beginning of the Reformation. But this period, by reason of its paramount influence on German cultivation, claims our particular attention; and I may hope that my dwelling on that memorable event, and on the chief actor in it, will be conducive to your forming a just idea of the place which they occupy in the literary history of Germany.

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At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the hierarchy might be not unaptly compared to a pedagogue, who has grown gray in the exercise of authority, and who becomes more harsh and morose with increasing age, because conscious of the decline of his power. Accustomed to implicit obedience from his disciples, he cannot conceive that they should outgrow their unquestioning compliance; and if he occasionally perceive the ebullition of a spirit tending to freedom, he strives to repress it by increased severity. The disciple, though bound to obedience both by custom and attachment, feels these bonds gradually loosen before the awakening self-consciousness of his masculine mind, while the ill-judged and senseless severity of the old man continues to defeat its object, until at length some trifling circumstance becomes the apparent cause, which calls the pupil (now matured to manhood) from his seclusion, into active life. In vain the pedagogue wrestles with the youthful giant. He loses the government, because he is unworthy of it, by his ignorance of the means necessary to its preservation. The youth shakes the school-dust from his feet,—hastens into active life,—strives for its highest honours and advantages—and wins the palm which he has merited.

As little can the bursting forth of the reformation in Germany be called an accident (indeed I acknowledge no accident in the history of mankind), as its receiving for its champion a man, who not only represented the spirit of his time, but whose character

bore the features of that of his country in peculiar strength and power. Germany, both by its geographical position, and by its moral and intellectual importance, is the centre of Europe. Thence in all times have originated those mighty movements which have swayed the destinies of European mankind.

Hermann, by his victory over Varus in the Westphalian forests, was the first to show the conquered nations, that the Roman *fusces* and axes were vain, when employed to bend the inflexible sense of freedom. Germany was the great camp of those, who crushed the colossus of Roman power, after its spirit had passed away. From Germany, Charlemagne sent forth his squadrons, in order to prevent the Saracens from destroying European culture and Christianity. In the centre of Germany, on those extensive plains, where the empire of the European world has so often been decided, near Merseburg, Henry I., whom, as the preserver of christendom, and the founder of the German towns, and of the class of burgesses, we may justly call "the great," withstood the attack of the Avares and Hungarians, by which, but for him, Europe must have become the prey of robbers and barbarians. On these same ensanguined plains, the noble king of Sweden died, not only for the political but also for the religious liberty of Europe; and, finally, in the glare of Moscow's burning, upon these plains was fought that great battle which liberated the European nations from the universality of Napoleon's iron sway.

The Genoese would hardly have discovered the new

world, had not the German compass pointed out the way. The German invention of printing has secured to Europe and the world the everlasting fruits of cultivation. Of the structure of the universe we should know but little, were it not for the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, and more recently of Herschel.

Yet it is not particular appearances in the political and scientific history of the people, but rather the whole moral and intellectual life, as it has grown in Germany, which has made this land the most important in all Europe: being the heart of Europe, it has been most lacerated. Its geographical position, and the history of past centuries, seem to denote that a spiritual revolution was to spring forth from this heart; and a glance at the political situation of Europe will show, that only in this *atelier* of European culture could a regeneration possibly have been prepared.

The inhabitants of the Pyrenean peninsula were too much occupied with the acquisition of earthly treasures in America and Eastern India, to pay attention to the inward stores of mind. France was employed in giving security to her political relations; while, at the university of Paris, mental exertion was compressed and impeded by the trammels of scholastic philosophy. England had just escaped from civil broils, and was reposing under a settled dynasty; but there the pressure of hierarchical power had never been so overwhelming as in the rest of Europe. In Italy, poetry and the arts were flourish-

ing with a splendour till then unknown; for the Holy Father imparted to the Italians only the honey of hierarchy, and never made them feel the sting. The treasures amassed by papal extortion from every European nation were expended in adorning the palace at Rome with all the magnificence of art; and herein the popes were really the successors of the Roman emperors, who, by the sweat and blood of conquered peoples, had erected their columns and Coliseums. Though it is true that, during the latter part of the fifteenth century, the popes, Nicholas the Fifth, Sixtus the Fourth, and even Leo the Tenth, were zealous patrons of arts and sciences, yet they were so only to shed worldly splendour round their courts, and not for the advancement of liberality and truth. The north and east of Europe were either, as in Scandinavia, torn by civil broils; or, as in Russia and Poland, immersed in ignorance so barbarous, that no spiritual restoration was to be hoped for, or, indeed, conceivable. Thus, Germany alone remains, as the land where the spark of enlightenment could kindle; and this assertion will, I think, be elucidated by the following observations.

During the long reign of the emperor Frederick the Third—from 1440 to 1493—the German princes had extended their power independently of the imperial authority. The union of the empire was gradually loosened; the electors being more anxious for the enlargement of their several territories than for the augmentation of the imperial splendour. The successor of Frederick the Third, Maximilian, a

noble and high-minded prince, gave, by his marriage with the rich heiress Maria of Burgundy, an increase of pomp and territory, though not of intensive power, to the imperial throne, and thereby roused the jealousy of the German princes, who abandoned the business of the empire in discontent, and waited but for a suitable occasion to give a mortal blow to the emperor's dominion. They were, however, constrained to preserve their union under one supreme head for some time longer, by the fear of their eastern enemy, the Turks. Such among them as had no voice in the election of an emperor—that is, who were not Electors—became gradually weakened by the frequent partitions of territory, arising from the laws of the country, and at length dwindled into the general class of German nobles; while the power of the Electors, whose territories, according to the Golden Bull of Charles the Fourth, were indivisible, necessarily increased. The excesses of the German nobility were checked by the Emperor Maximilian, who abolished that law of force called *Faustrecht*, by a sworn national compact, which secured to the third class (the burgesses) the fruits of their perseverance in commerce and industry, and afforded the possibility of awakening the mind to a higher spiritual cultivation.

The spirit of the crusades, which had allured the chivalry to distant lands, had long since subsided. A considerable number of the fortresses and strongholds, where the fierce knights had domineered as petty kings, and even fought with princes, were de-

molished: and the knights themselves, thus compelled to seek for shelter in the towns, mingled with the burgesses; with whom those, also, who remained on their estates, entered into a more close connexion. Thus, then, the interests of these two classes became less opposed than formerly; and, consequently, the knight and citizen could more easily be enlisted for a common cause. The class of peasants, it is true, still sighed under oppressive laws and privations, and their ignorance corresponded to their oppression; yet a consciousness of degradation was gaining ground among them, and this feeling was the best guarantee that they would zealously seize the first opportunity of bursting the bonds by which their energies were fettered. It is a remarkable fact, and one frequently occurring to the historical observer, that the more rude and oppressed a multitude has been, the greater has been their tendency to the abuse of freedom when acquired. While the Reformation was achieving its most splendid triumphs, the “war of the peasants,” as it is called, broke out; and in the same moment that the peasants saw themselves liberated from spiritual thraldom, they longed for political independence. It was not in the French revolution that the rights of man were first discussed. The peasants of South Germany were as apt at these discussions as the jacobins of France; and both were equal in the exercise of barbarities disgraceful to humanity. Man must be prepared by education for freedom, if he be not to

lose it in the struggle; and Schiller has rightly said,

“ Vor dem freien Manne erzittert nicht :  
Vor dem Sclaven wenn er die Kette bricht ! ”

Such was the *political* state of Germany at the close of the fifteenth century. A cursory view of its *moral* and *intellectual* state at the same period will not be void of interest.

We have seen that the fifteenth century is among the most fruitful in important events of any in the history of European culture; and Germany was, during this period, well prepared for a general mental revolution. The discovery of America did, indeed, turn the attention of men to the wonderful appearance of a new part of the world, as it were magically rising from the waters; yet this event, however closely it might be connected with the progress of some branches of science, as geography and natural history, affected at least not immediately the interests of the commonweal of Germany, being a central country of Europe. But the revived study of the classical languages and wisdom, which was pursued with a zeal till then unknown, and materially promoted by the number of Greek scholars who took shelter in Italy after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople, opened a lovely vista to the plains of science, perceptible only to the eye of the soul. Germany, in a particular manner, participated in this spiritual movement. It was the assiduous study of the Greek authors, sacred and profane, that furnished the

weapons with which the great Reformers, *Luther*, *Melanchthon*, *Zwinglius*, *Calvin*, and others, fought and discomfited the hydra of hierarchy. *Laurentius Valla* in Italy, *Budeus* in France, and *Collet* in England, were either precursors or co-operators of *John Reuchlin* and *Erasmus of Rotterdam* in the diffusion of the taste for classical study. Through the exertions of these great men, the dust of scholastic philosophy, at the universities of Paris, Prague, and Bologna, was about to be removed ; yet we should remember, that these exertions were directed solely to the refinement of taste, and the acquisition of the classical wisdom of the Greeks and Romans : for, though it be true that the degraded state of the Church, and particularly the despicable life of the monks, were attacked, both seriously and in satire ; still this was done, more on account of the ignorance and tastelessness of the clergy, than of their being a papal means for obstructing the rays of reason and enlightenment. Let, however, the motives of these scholars have been what they may, yet intellect, giving a critical formation to taste, prepared for the awakening of reason, and for the triumph of that belief which was to be founded thereon.

At the German universities of Prague, Freiburg, Greifswald, Basel, and Heidelberg, the study of the classics was pursued with unremitting diligence. The barbarous writing of the middle ages gave place to the polished style of Cicero and Quintilian ; and learned treatises were written on Greek profane

authors, who had been, till lately, unknown even by name. The fathers of the Church—especially those who had written in Greek—were studied and printed; yet all this, while it prepared, cannot be said to have produced the Reformation. To the people, classical culture still continued foreign; and for many reasons, only one of which we shall here mention—namely, that these objects of taste and scientific research were treated in a language unknown to the nation generally. Had Luther addressed the people in Latin, either by word or writing, his threats and exhortations would never have been dangerous to the pope. Something, however, there was, at this period, which the people *did* understand—the gross immorality and debasement in which the catholic clergy was sunk, the monasteries being mere seminaries of iniquitous excess. It is generally known what revolting facts relative to monasteries were brought to light in England, when Henry the Eighth, eager for their treasures, stretched forth his powerful arm against them. Of the monastic life in Europe, at the period of the Reformation, a judgment may be formed from the expressions of Erasmus, who, himself educated in a monastery, spoke from actual experience, but was not an adherent of the reformed belief. I should mention, that this passage from Erasmus is found in his treatise *De Contemptu Mundi*, which was published previously to the Reformation. His fear of men, and his detestation of Luther, made him pro-

nounce more mildly on the monastic life, in his later writings. His sentiments are as follows:—

“ Monasteries,” he says, “ are abysses whence all escape is hopeless. Many do not descend them gradually, but throw themselves headlong down. In former times, monasteries were nothing more than the solitary abodes of honest men, who, disgusted by the vices with which the yet half-pagan world was stained, sought secluded places, where they might lead a more simple and holy life. A monk was only a virtuous Christian. But now the monasteries are no longer solitudes—they are the intestines of the world, and schools of vice. People to whom we can scarcely allow the prudence sufficient for regulating a kitchen have now the administration of the Church confided, or rather betrayed, to them. Many of them migrate to the monasteries, in order to live more at ease, and gratify their appetites. Those who by necessity would have accustomed themselves to domestic life and industry, here lead a lazy and profligate life. Those who, on account of their low birth and inability, would have played indifferent parts in the world, here, after having lauded poverty, lead the life of satraps, and indulge in princely splendours. Those who, content with one wife, must have borne the yoke of matrimony, now, without restriction, proceed from one excess to another. Chance leads many to the monastery; others are driven thither by disappointed love, by the dread of storms, by sickness and the danger of death; and

not a few by superstition, and an ignorance of what constitutes true Christianity."

In many of his other works Erasmus has attacked the monastic life with equal scorn and sarcasm, as did many of the champions of moral purity: the learned Italian, Laurentius Valla, for instance, long before the Reformation, and during the progress of that event; Thomas Murner, Ulrich von Hutten, and others. But the evil was not confined to the monks; the rest of the clergy, abbots, bishops, and archbishops, were equally demoralized, and their lives were in no way calculated to serve as models for christian imitation. The halo which had formerly surrounded the reverend fathers was extinguished by the blasts of their lust and extravagance; nor could the thunders of excommunication, when wielded by an unholy hand, have any terrors for those who began to draw comparisons between the consecration of a priest, and his want of sanctity. The papal see itself had, if possible, a still worse reputation with the people of Germany, than the dispensers of its will, who have been just described. In Italy, where the proceedings of the papal court could be closely observed, all its faults and weaknesses were indeed discovered and ridiculed, but not harshly treated, because the popes, heedless of their own or others' moral purity, yet encouraged splendour and refinement. The sums which they extorted from foreign nations were employed for the embellishment, not of Rome only, but of all Italy. Poets and artists were retained

in pay, and supported with princely liberality; in addition to all which, we may observe, that the extravagance of the court of Rome could at no period create disgust among a people, which has ever been fond of indulging in sensual pleasures. The Italians required of the pope only the same indulgence which his personal depravity needed from the laity. In Germany, however, it was far otherwise. It has been one of the noblest features in the German national character, that the people, as history witnesses, has always had the deepest horror of moral depravity, and under all circumstances has expressed it freely. The Germans have never omitted to consider the moral worth of men possessed of distinguished mental qualities. Their poets, artists, and statesmen, however eminent, have never enjoyed the popular favour, if wanting in the virtues of purity and justice. Thus it may be readily conceived that the excesses of the papal court must have excited the deepest loathing in Germany; distance magnifying and placing in stronger light the frailties and faults, which had become familiar, and merely subjects of good-humoured satire, to the sympathizing sensuality of the Italians. It should also be remembered, that, since the campaigns of Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick the Second, a mutual detestation had existed between the Italians and the Germans; and thus, what in a German pope might perhaps have been leniently judged, was deemed, in the Italian, an inexpiable crime. On every occasion which presented itself, the Italians

evinced their contempt for the “German barbarians,” as they termed them ; and the noble knight Ulrich von Hutten was right when he reproached the papal court with their treatment of the Germans as ignorant, superstitious hordes, fit only to gratify the extortionate spirit of ecclesiastical tyranny. Hutten had been in Rome, a close observer of the course of living there pursued, and hence his testimony deserves implicit faith. But this unfounded contempt for the Germans was not confined to the churchmen resident in Rome ; the papal legates and emissaries in Germany boldly declared it, in the very face of those from whom they drew the sums necessary to their support in indolence, luxury, and vice. The exasperation of the German people was nourished and augmented even by the mendicant monks, who wandered from place to place, complaining of the depravity of the court of Rome, and of the secular clergy ; while the writings of Erasmus and others, who investigated the manners of ecclesiastics, and exposed their gross and shameless ignorance, were translated into the vernacular tongue, and eagerly perused by all classes. The clergy, which had heretofore been regarded as the sole supporters and cultivators of learning and science, had lost this glorious distinction ; and though this remark may not be peculiarly applicable to the *Italian* clergy of that period, still the German people were disposed to deduce all decay of morals and discipline, as well as of intellectual culture, from that source whence they were entitled to expect the opposite results.

The incessant and shameless extortions of the papal court had deeply outraged the public feeling. The traffic in indulgences was unblushingly carried on by the most worthless emissaries, in the name and on behalf of the pope; the utter disregard of even the show of decency in the management of these monstrous bargains for spiritual forgiveness being equally revolting to the moral feeling and common sense of even an uncultivated people. Pardons, not only for past sins, but also for projected crimes, were publicly sold, under the sanction of papal authority; and when Leo the Tenth stood in need of pecuniary supplies, the "German barbarians" were called upon to furnish them, without any regard to the delicacy or propriety of the means employed for rendering the call effective.

The earliest and most zealous adherents of the reformation were the *burgesses*; a class which, since the establishment of towns in Germany, had become firmly incorporated, and was distinguished by purity of morals, mental energy, and a disposition for higher intellectual improvement. Among them, a shadow, at least, of the delightful poetry of the middle ages, had been preserved in the meister song; and among them the light of moral and religious restoration found its first and most devoted followers. They were so, not from scientific views alone, like the learned, nor from policy, like the princes, but from an internal sense, and firm conviction, that the Christian faith stood in absolute need of being re-

stored to its primeval purity. I have already mentioned, that the German nobles had lost much of the feudal influence enjoyed by them during the middle ages; and considering them as a class distinct from the burgesses, it cannot be doubted that the latter were the more cultivated. At the commencement of the Reformation, the German nobility, for a great part, remained secluded in their castles, with no other literary associate than a half-taught monk or chaplain, who imparted his own small allotment of learning to the children of his lord; or, in the service of some potentate, the nobleman was exclusively devoted to military avocations, which have never been favourable to science. To this rule there were, however, some honourable exceptions, among whom I may particularly mention *Francis von Sickingen*, who defended the learned Reuchlin against his fanatical aggressors; *Hans von Dalberg*, *Götz von Berlichingen*, and others; but, above all, *Ulrich von Hutten*, the able and fervid champion of reason. Yet these few and striking exceptions do but confirm the view which I have taken; and we must ever bear in mind the fact, that the Reformation was prepared most maturely in the middle classes. These, feeling more than any other the necessity for casting off the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny, embraced the Reformation with a fervour only equalled by the moderation and dignity with which it was maintained.

Such, gentlemen, was the *moral* and *intellectual*

state of Germany at the commencement of the Reformation. But it would be vain to attempt a deduction of this gigantic event from single and separate causes. No peculiar political event, no defect in the constitution of church or state, considered singly, can be said to have produced such an universal movement; nay, I will go farther, and assert, that the combined operation of all these causes could not have called forth the spirit of moral regeneration among men, unless assisted by that all-powerful and mysterious impulse of the human mind, which, throughout the entire course of history, manifests itself more or less clearly, and at certain periods, when the general co-operation of the moral and political causes just alluded to has a tendency to one point, gains a determined form and life. This impulse is that longing for perfection, innate in the mind of man, expressed in the history of the human race collectively, as in that of the single individual; and when this impulse urges mankind to active exertion, then it is that we perceive those great historical events and revolutions arise, which further the progress of the nations towards moral and intellectual perfection. To the historical inquirer into the records of Germany, the fifteenth century must appear a highly remarkable period preparative to the Reformation. The national mind is no longer satisfied with the dreams of its youth, and its painfully acquired knowledge can afford it no consolation; but, until the period of adopting and executing a mas-

line resolve, it continues in feverish restlessness, by turns seizing and rejecting a thousand various subjects. In one instance, it flies to the most remote recesses of sophistical speculation; in another, to the crucible of the magician: but, under all the forms assumed by an unappeasable inquietude, we find the yearning after truth to be the great mover of research. The popular tale of Dr. Faustus, which had arisen during the fifteenth century, is in some sort an allegorical expression of the spirit of the age. The minds of Faustus, and that of his time, were equally bewildered in their seeking after truth; but, for the latter, a solution of all doubt was found in the Reformation, while the former is represented to have perished in the mazes of doubt.

Having thus regarded Germany as the nation where the human mind was mostly prepared for a great spiritual struggle, we will now proceed to consider the character of the man who bore the standard of liberty in this struggle, and victoriously carried it far beyond his original intention.

This man was Martin Luther, the son of a poor miner, and born in Eisleben on the 10th of November, 1483. If wealth and prosperity in youth were necessary for training a great man to great achievements, Luther never could have shone in the field of history. As a wandering scholar, he was obliged to seek support by singing before the mansions of the wealthy; but this early habitude to want

gave him that spirit of fearless independence, which marked his character through the whole course of his career. A susceptive mind, an energetic will, an eager perseverance in the acquisition of knowledge, were the endowments which distinguished him in early youth, and which were strengthened and supported by a cheerful fortitude and a strictly preserved moral purity. Yet, in his maturing towards manhood, his internal conflicts commenced, and in struggling for truth he boldly fought his way through the dark abyss of doubt. At first, indeed, it seemed that he would be lost and overpowered on his gloomy way; but the light at length broke in upon his soul, and led the searcher after truth unto its only source. The Bible, which he read in the translation called by the Catholics the *Vulgate*, so-laced and calmed his mind; and the study of St. Augustine's works—the patron of the monastery to which he had retired, and with whom he seems to have possessed a kindred mind—revealed to him the means for conquering his own doubts and those of others. In 1508, through the mediation of the Reverend Johan Staupitz, vicar of Meissen and Thüringen, who, on a visitation to the monastery, had seen and admired the young ecclesiastic on account of his application and acquirements, Luther was appointed professor of philosophy to the university of Wittenberg, then recently established.

He immediately commenced his career as the de-

cided and avowed opponent of the scholastic method, which had hitherto fettered the progress of science. By this conduct he acquired a powerful influence on the minds of the studying youth, but a still greater on those of the people generally by his inspiring sermons. When (contrary to his own desire) the degree of doctor of divinity was conferred upon him, the oath administered on the occasion seems to have given a higher religious force and impulse to his whole internal being. He now applied himself with unwearied assiduity to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and hereby was enabled to pursue his devoted study of the Bible with a success which, at a later period of his life, afforded him the means of vanquishing fanaticism, hypocrisy, and unbelief. His favourite project was to furnish a German translation of the Bible; but before he could accomplish this, he was called into the field of active enterprise. Leo the Tenth, a man of loose morals, though a patron of the arts and sciences, stood in need of money; and an application to the wealthy and simple Germans seemed to His Holiness the most natural and effective mode of supplying the necessity. On the present occasion, the papal pretext was the building of St. Peter's Church at Rome; and as the popes had, for a considerable time, experienced a difficulty in levying what was termed the *Peter's pence*, they had thought fit to accommodate themselves to the growing commercial spirit of the times, and commenced a sale of plenary indulgences for all sins,

past, present, and future ; and *licensed hawkers* of these commodities were sent over to Germany on the part of Leo. One of these, perhaps the most bare-faced, named Johan Tetzel, came in contact with Luther. The citizens of Wittenberg, who had paid a heavy sum for the pardon of sins committed, and the permission to begin a fresh course of vice, confiding in the purgatorial passport which they had obtained from the pope, refused all atonements prescribed by Luther ; such being deemed superfluous, according to the doctrine of indulgences.

This incensed our spiritual hero ; and on the 31st of October, 1517, he posted his ninety-five theses on the gates of the Castle Church of Wittenberg ; and, according to the then prevailing custom of the universities, summoned Tetzel to a disputation. A sermon commenting on those theses, which, with them, was soon spread throughout Germany, exposed the absurdity of the trade in indulgences so clearly as to carry conviction to the least cultivated understanding. At first, Luther spoke humbly and modestly, though firmly and openly, entreating for the reform of abuses which, during centuries, had crept into the ecclesiastical constitution. But when the pope and the cardinals, dazzled by that power which, for so many centuries, had been undisputedly wielded by their predecessors, treated the whole affair as a mere altercation between two enraged polemical disputants, then Luther appealed to public opinion, and undertook a fundamental investigation and total overthrow

of the whole papal system, founded, as it was, on erroneous belief, and a slavish observance of pharisaical tenets. Princes and peoples embraced the new doctrine; and the pope, instead of prudently endeavouring to avert the impending storm, let loose a host of Roman scribblers in the papal pay, who produced no other effect on Luther than that of accelerating his public and solemn renunciation of the errors of popery.

At the commencement of the spiritual contest, the young emperor Charles had regarded it with seeming indifference. He had conceived a plan of universal dominion; and the movement excited by Luther appeared to him rather calculated to further, than to counteract his views. The pope and the clergy would, he thought, be busily engaged in protecting their interests, thus vitally attacked by the great reformer: while the princes of Germany, by becoming parties in the religious quarrel, would leave him more at liberty to attain the grand object of his ambition.

So thought Charles: but his cunning and undecided mind had miscalculated both the national character of Germany, and that mighty mental power which bursts through all earthly trammels, when combating for the highest and holiest objects. Finding the Reformation opposed to his plans of universal monarchy, he openly declared for the pope: yet the stream of public opinion had meanwhile worked its bed; and neither emperor nor pope had power to bind the outstretched arm of Luther.

Strong, by the confidence in God, and the approval of his own conscience, he had, before the diet at Worms, not only defended himself from the charges brought against him, but also irresistibly attacked the errors and abuses of the Roman see. By the bravery and skill which marked his conduct on this trying occasion, he acquired many friends among the numerous host of nobles and princes then assembled; but, notwithstanding his successful appeal to the justice of the emperor, he had much to fear from the secret machinations of his papal foes, and therefore accepted the asylum offered to him by the elector of Saxony, to one of whose castles, near Eisenach, he retired. Here it was that he employed himself in translating the Bible, an undertaking which he executed with an energy fully commensurate with the boldness of the design. To this day his version remains an unrivalled sample of plain, chaste, and pious language, and the corner-stone of the German literature. After the conclusion of this work, which was the main instrument in achieving the Reformation, the activity of Luther increased with each succeeding victory gained by him in the good cause to which he had now exclusively dedicated his exertions. If we consider how this man fulfilled his duties as a pastor, and as the stay of the infant evangelical community, writing and preaching as a scholar and man of the people, comprehending, as it were at a glance, the whole social, moral, political, and intellectual state of his country—making all his manifold duties and en-

deavours subservient to one great purpose—and that the greatest to which they could have been directed—we must, indeed, admit that he was inspired by the Divine Spirit, and that he worked as the chosen instrument of Providence. His undaunted courage when rebuking the duke George of Saxony, and Henry the Eighth of England—or when combating the fanaticism of a Münster or Karlstein, and the proud and pharisaical indifference of Erasmus—is always that of a mind glowing with heavenly enthusiasm for human right and eternal truth, for national good and moral freedom. His great work is indelibly registered in the annals of eternity; and while Germany possesses a history, he will be its brightest ornament; for though the names of our kings and statesmen were to pass away into oblivion, that of *Luther* must still remain with undiminished lustre.

As no human greatness is above the reach of envy and calumny, so we find that in his most splendid exertions, Luther has been misrepresented and vilified by those, from whom he wrested the helm by which they misled mankind. The incessant and calumnious accusations heaped upon the great reformer by these enemies of light, denounced him as a sacrilegious innovator—a sort of antichrist; nor was such conduct, on their part, in any degree inconsistent or surprising. To them the Reformation appeared a revolutionary movement, calculated to produce an important and fatal schism in the church, and hence their execration of him who directed his whole life to the furtherance

of that great event. But what must really call forth our astonishment is, that, among the protestants of modern times, so many sound thinkers and men of talent are to be found who lament the Reformation, and disregard its *author*, as they term Luther. These learned, but, on this point, mistaken individuals, contend that the Reformation was really a misfortune for mankind ; that, on the one hand, it favoured the scepticism and philosophical self-sufficiency of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; while, on the other, it had an injurious effect on the aesthetical cultivation of the national mind in Germany; that Luther substituted, in place of the acknowledgment of papal infallibility, an evil equally mischievous, namely, a blind belief in the decisions of the Bible ; that he, to whom poetry and the fine arts were valueless, by his bold attack on the hierarchy, suppressed the rising study of classical literature in Germany before it had reached a mature development. Though these lectures must exclude all abstract polemical topics, yet I could not refrain from mentioning the objections just enumerated, they being in direct opposition to my own views and opinions, which, as closely connected with the literary history of Germany, I shall now proceed to lay before you.

As the plant grows out of the grain confided by the seedsman to the earth, so the Reformation, as we have already shown, developed itself from the slumbering impulse hidden in the recesses of previous centuries, and was an event naturally growing out of

the course of history, and therefore a crisis necessary to the subsequent culture of mankind. Without a Luther the Reformation would inevitably have occurred. The human race stood in need of reorganization ; reason was struggling to burst its bonds ; and not even the catholics can deny that the Romish church called aloud for reform at the period in question. History bears witness, that emperors and kings, cardinals and bishops, were unanimous in their expression of this want. The synod of Basil wished to supply it, but failed in the endeavour : the emperor Maximilian met in conference with Francis of France for the same purpose : why then was the reform, thus generally felt, and avowed to be requisite, not effected by peaceable means ? Because the potentates, temporal and spiritual, perceived that the malady was incurable ; at least, by any remedies which they could supply. They feared to attempt the repair of the crumbling structure of the church, lest, at the first touch, it might fall and overwhelm them in its ruins ; and hence they left it as it was, flattering themselves that the danger was remote—a reflection which, in most cases, comes to the consolation of indolence and fear.

Nor could the depravity of the catholic clergy be checked by moral prescripts and restrictions, for of these there was already an ample sufficiency in the canon books, and increased discipline could, at best, only cleanse the shell, without touching the internal putrefaction.

The mental revolution thus so necessary was accelerated, though involuntarily, yet materially, by the popes themselves, whose patronage of the arts and sciences did much for their diffusion, and consequently for the extension of the empire of mind. I have called this effect of papal patronage involuntary on their parts ; and it is certain, that since Hildebrand, no pope had worn the triple crown, who with a clear perception of the tendency of the public spirit, endeavoured to satisfy its wants ; and for the suppression of that spirit, even a Hildebrand would have been insufficient, had he attempted it, as he never would have done, by violent means.

If the Reformation be termed a misfortune for mankind, then we must also lament, that, by the laws of nature, a youth cannot always remain so. We may very properly ask of those, who lament this great occurrence as a deplorable separation from the old church—Will you call it a misfortune, if, in order to save the life of a man, you must sever a limb from his body ? True, herein there is a misfortune, but it lies in the disease, and not in the remedy.

What effect was produced by the Reformation on the æsthetical cultivation of Germany, particularly as regards the study of the ancient classics, I shall have a more suitable opportunity to consider, when reviewing the different authors subsequent to this period ; and shall only now remark, that the classical studies were pursued during the Reformation with a zeal till then unknown in Germany.

In proof of this assertion, I need but quote the names of such men as Reuchlin, Rudolph Agricola, Melanchthon, Oekolampadius, Camerarius, von dem Busche, Erasmus, von Dalberg, Wilibald Pirkheimer, and others. It cannot be denied, that the principal inducement to the study of the ancient languages at this period was, that it enabled the theologians to carry on their polemical disputes more successfully against the adherents of the pope, who were all skilful scholastics, encased, as it were, in classical armour. But it is neither strange nor lamentable, that the rays of public spirit were all converging to one focus. Freedom from popery was the only deeply felt want of the time, and, as long as the combat for that freedom continued, so long the weapons used therein could not be laid aside. Every man of power, learning, and public spirit, was called, both by the general necessity, and by his internal vocation, to strive for conquest over the common foe. When an enemy from without threatens the liberty of our country, do we not praise the peaceful citizens—the merchant, the artizan, the painter, the poet—when they lay aside the implements suited to their various avocations, and seize upon the sword, in order to expel the bold invader from their native land? With what show of justice, then, can we reproach the valiant combatants for truth and mental freedom because their poetical powers shone not forth so brilliantly as their theological skill; or, because they relied rather

upon the Bible, than upon pagan wisdom, for promoting enlightenment in their unsettled and stormy times?

But I must leave this subject, in order to investigate the charges brought against Luther, which will be best refuted by a dispassionate consideration of his public character. If moral greatness and spiritual worth in a man must be estimated, not by the dazzling qualities which adorn the fashionable hero of modern times, nor by the quantity of learning which lies, as it were, a dead capital in the mind; but, by the deep earnestness with which God, the source of all truth, is sought after; by the courage, with which every thing most dear to man is sacrificed, in the combat for this truth, by the union of mental strength and enthusiasm, and by the exertion of those energies of the soul, through which, at the call of the inward voice, the palm of victory is merited and won—then Luther must, indeed, be termed a great and lofty character. As such, he belongs to universal history—to the world; and, in this view, it is perfectly indifferent where he was born, or what language he spoke. Yet, to the German people he is especially endeared, because, in his mind, the nobler features of their national character are vividly reflected. He was courageous, humble, and persevering, and of inexhaustible mental powers; grave, yet cheerful; daring, where there was occasion to defy the foe; but conciliating, when he met with a repentant spirit, and magnanimous in his treat-

ment of the vanquished. Intrepid and undaunted, and proud in the armour of his belief, did he, a poor and private man, rich only in faith and love, defend himself before the splendid assembly at Worms, and fearlessly assail the papal power. Against Henry of England his zeal was equally ardent, sincere and uncompromising ; yet, he also addressed both the pope and king in conciliatory terms, from a wish to win them to the realms of truth. His detractors have denounced his conduct in this respect as inconsistent ; but to me it appears perfectly consistent with his vocation, as a preacher of peace and concord. Even his friends and admirers seem to have reproached him, for having prepared no deep and well-digested plan, and for allowing himself to be determined by momentary impulse, yet I am inclined to regard such censure as the highest eulogy on his inspired character. The internal voice calls to him, and he obeys the calling ; and it is this impulsive force of spiritual enthusiasm, which imparts itself to the multitude, who are to be moved. The general, the statesman, the legislator, may act upon prudential and well-digested plans, and yet how frequently the work of human intellect miscarries, and the wisest schemes prove unable to withstand some trifling obstacle, which no worldly wisdom could foresee ? But the man of God, who, like Luther, can electrify centuries, and bring nations within the sphere of light—he must obey no guide save that inward voice, which never can deceive. Human schemes and calculations are foreign to him and to his purpose. He speaks

and acts solely from impulse—but the impulse is divine!

Luther, a man *from* the people, was also the man *of* the people. He knew, expressed, and satisfied their wants, and was thus the representative of the moral and religious character of his age. But this age had also a representative of its learning, and what is termed *classical cultivation*, in one, who though not by birth a German, yet, having decidedly influenced the progress of learning, by the revival of classical study in Germany (which brought him in contact with Luther, and the most distinguished men of his time), may be supposed to have no ordinary claims on our attention.

Desiderius Erasmus—commonly called of Rotterdam, though he was born at the Dutch town Gouda, two miles from that city—while yet a boy, was imbued with the love of classical study, and thus early evinced talents so unusual, that Rudolf Agricola, the enthusiastic admirer of the classics, having examined him, amongst others, on a school visitation, prognosticated his future eminence in the field of literature. The fruit of an amour between a monk and a lady of some rank, Erasmus very early imbibed an antipathy against the monastic life, but was, notwithstanding, induced to take orders, which served only to make his aversion for monks and monasteries still more marked and striking. In his twenty-fourth year he left the monastery of Stein, and never again made any lengthened residence within the gloomy walls of a cloister. We now find him tra-

velling to Paris, London, Vienna, Bologna, Rome, &c. in close intercourse with emperors, princes, popes, and cardinals ; more sought after than seeking others, and every where following the exclusive impulse of his soul for the promotion of the study of Greek and Roman antiquity—an impulse which had been rendered irresistible by his perusal of the works of the learned Laurentius Valla. He published numerous editions of the Roman and Greek classics, as also various works on education, in which he strenuously recommended the reading and study of the classical authors ; nay, in his zeal, he often deified Socrates, Virgil and Horace. A highly important work, as preparatory to the Reformation, though he was unable to see its effects, was his Latin translation of the Greek fathers, which was followed by his edition of a critical paraphrase of the New Testament. The modern biographer of Erasmus, Adolph Müller, tells us, that there was hardly a pope, prince, or cardinal among his contemporaries, to whom he had not dedicated some small treatise on learned subjects, and none who failed to express, by rich presents, their pleasure at the honour done to them, by such dedication. His authority in matters of learning was oracular ; and, when Luther's new doctrine appeared, the pope and the emperor looked to Erasmus, as the only one who, by his eminent learning, was qualified to combat and to conquer the dangerous innovator. But, before the time of Luther, Erasmus had in various writings severely attacked the profligacy and

scholastic obscurity of the monkish life ; and when Luther first raised his voice, the literary champion chose his side, in the belief that the study of the classics would be promoted by a reform in the ecclesiastical world, while Luther, and the other leaders of the Reformation for their parts, relied on securing his invaluable assistance. But we soon perceive this Erasmus, so rich in Greek and Roman wisdom, possessed of more learning, perhaps, than all the reformers put together, suffering under the most painful embarrassment, by his want of moral energy and strength of mind ; having neither courage enough to act according to his inward conviction, nor enthusiasm sufficient to embrace the popular cause. On the one hand, he was anxious to avoid a rupture with the pope, the emperor, and the other great dignitaries of catholic Christendom, from whom he enjoyed those earthly honours which he too highly estimated ; while, on the other, shame prevented him from openly denouncing the Reformation, since, for the greater part, the principles promulgated by the evangelical party had been previously laid down in many of his writings. A natural consequence of this weakness and indecision was, that both contending parties mistrusted him, till, at length, his vanity, envy of Luther—whose fame he was anxious to diminish—and his eagerness for worldly honours decided the point, and associated him with the adversaries of the Reformation. Had Erasmus been a man of Luther's energy, and one whom the people could comprehend ; had he been convinced of

the justice of that cause which he so skilfully yet fruitlessly defended, it cannot be doubted that, by his vast learning, he would have been still more serviceable to the catholic cause, than was Ignatius Loyola, with his jesuitical institutions, the strongest bulwark of popery. But it is a curse which accompanies every selfish action, whether in religion, science, or politics, that it passes tracelessly away. The controversial writings of both these eminent men are marked by the peculiar and personal characteristics of the authors, and are thus extremely interesting. Luther appears bold and intrepid, strong in the armour of faith and enthusiasm. What his representation wants in systematic consistency and form, is largely compensated by the fulness of internal truth. His words rush like a mountain torrent, hurrying the dubious mind along by a force which may not be withstood. Erasmus, on the contrary, is subtle, polished, and cuttingly sarcastic in his address, which is couched in a form perfectly systematic and correct. He persuades the intellect, but leaves the heart and feeling unsolaced and unsatisfied. He never clears doubts away, but rather arouses them the more, catching at words and turns of expression, but losing sight of the subject-matter. His style may be likened to the serpent, which, winding among grass and flowers, eludes the arm of its pursuer.

I have instituted this comparison between these two rival controvertists, because they in some degree

represent the two contending elements of the time. Classical learning, as it had taken root on European soil in the fifteenth century, could not in the sixteenth enjoy an independent sphere, for it was subservient to the highest concern of the human race. Before the ideal Greek art, and Greek philosophy, could find shelter in the breast of man, it was requisite that the *vacuum* should be then filled up; that the longing, which no paganism, even the most cultivated, could ever satisfy, should be appeased. But for this purpose continual struggles were necessary, and only when reason had gained a perfect victory, could taste and the sense of the beautiful be duly considered. As I have already observed, every thing durable develops itself slowly; and this remark is strikingly illustrated by the history of German literature, from the time of Luther till the middle of the last century.

Up to the present point we have considered Luther generally, as the man of his century,—as the great reformer, in whom the spirit of his age gained a distinct form, and who gave to the national impulse a determined direction—we must now appreciate his merit as the founder of German literature, inasmuch as his authority transmitted to the German people an universally adopted literary language. It would carry us too far, were we to enter at large into the history of the German language before the time of Luther; but some brief remarks are necessary, in order to ascertain the value of his exertions.

Very early in the history of the German people,

two principal dialects, the *Upper German*, or the *Suabian*, and the *Low German* or *Saxon* formed themselves; and these have remained, even to our times, as the popular idioms, notwithstanding the general adoption of the literary language, which itself bears marks of the two provincial dialects. From both of these we have literary relics preserved from olden times. Through the influence of the Suabian emperors of the Hohenstaufen family, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Suabian dialect became the form of the court and chivalric poetry, and that in which the minnesong was expressed; but when, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this minnesong had subsided into the meistersong, the literary language lost, considerably, the Suabian dialect, and approximated to the Saxon, which latter, as spoken in central Germany, became mixed with the former; and thus, in the fifteenth century, before the time of Luther, we have proofs of a *High German* language spoken in Upper Saxony and Hessia, that is, in central Germany; and I wish to impress on your attention, that the modern High German language must be regarded as an amalgamation of these two dialects. I shall not here inquire how far the Frankonian dialect (which undoubtedly was the court language during the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, and in which we have various literary remains) had any influence on the formation of the High German language, as it appeared in the time of Luther; but

there is one circumstance connected herewith, which should not be silently passed over; namely, that the language of the literary relics just alluded to bears some resemblance to the Austrian and Silesian dialects, as still spoken. Luther, a native of Saxony, availed himself of his provincial idiom, which had already acquired some value and authority by his speeches and writings. It is, however, utterly erroneous to suppose, with Adelung, that Luther used exclusively the Meisnian dialect of Upper Saxony, since he himself in his *Table Talk* expressly says; “I have no distinct or special language of my own, but use the common German language, that both north and south Germans may understand me.” Thus he refers to a general language; that in which the resolutions of the diet were couched, and in which Albrecht Dürer, the celebrated painter, a contemporary of the Reformer, and a native of Nürnberg, wrote his mathematical works. This language, in which Luther thenceforth treated of the holiest concern of the German people, soon became as national as the great work of Reformation itself. If we had no other evidence of his truly German character, this single circumstance of his having set the example of writing and speaking in a language which all succeeding authors, even those who detested his dogmas, were constrained to adopt, would suffice to establish his claim to the title of the great literary legislator of his country. He cannot, it is true, be called the creator of the High German language,

for no individual can create a language,—but he may be looked upon as the founder of its literary authority. He determined and fixed its grammatical form, and cultivated it according to its internal spirit, or, in other words, promoted its organical development. Without Luther and the Reformation, the German people would probably have never enjoyed the advantage of an universal language, and the poetical faculties of the nation must have been expressed in the various dialects. These would certainly have each gained a more independent development; but a general national language and cultivation, such as those which now support the German character, as the sole remaining relics from a brilliant former time, would have been unknown. It is the universal language and literature of a people which, as it were, cements their national character. Germany, portioned into two great divisions, must have disappeared from the rank of nations, had not the language and literature, more than the imperial constitution, or than a patriotism too often liable to suspicion, supported the idea of union and nationality.

It is difficult to say whether Luther had proposed to give to his countrymen a language which was thenceforth to be the ruling one. I am inclined to believe that herein also he acted by a certain inspiration. He deemed it not his incumbent duty to inquire whether the Suabian or the Saxon dialect were the more rich or euphonious, but he chose that language which, he knew, would be understood

by both tribes. Had he himself been a philologist, or could he by possibility have made inquiries, like those of modern times, as to the respective merits of the two idioms, it is more than probable that he would never have decided. But he chose, in the clear conviction that the divine word was to be announced to the German people in a language which all, whether natives of the north or south, might understand, and which bears not the mark of any particular province, but the stamp of the entire national character. On the wisdom of his selection all those, who may judge the modern German language impartially and fundamentally, will be competent to decide, and I think their decision will be that he selected wisely.

As the Reformation could not have been effected without opening to the people the only source of religious conviction, so the ascendancy of the High German language could never have been established, had not the translation of the Bible been executed in that language. And, gentlemen, what a translation! It is as if the combined spirit of all those, who composed the sacred volumes, had assisted the man of God in expressing, by simple and energetic language, the spirit of their inspired writings. As long as Germans acknowledge the authority of the Bible, so long must they revere this translation by Luther. Not that I believe him to have been invariably correct in his version, or to have used the most refined terms, or to have employed the highest

critical power ; but because the language, taken as a whole, is unparalleled for earnest dignity, brevity, and enthusiastic zeal. Connoisseurs can, I doubt not, point to much which has been recently done for the critical elucidation of the sacred writings, and for the exposition of inaccuracies in Luther's version ; yet, though frequent attempts have been made to supplant it by translations, termed better and more faithful and refined, what has invariably been the result ? The modern discoveries are carefully registered in the theological systems of neologists, but Luther's book has remained the book of the people, because the national taste and spirit have scorned to assume a garb, more fashionable, but less venerable and dignified. This translation of the Bible of course may, I repeat it, be justly regarded as the corner-stone of the High German language, since, having been placed into the hands both of the cultivated and of the uncultivated classes, the people would be addressed in no other language than that, thus perpetually before them. Even the catholics themselves, who denied the authority of that translation, were constrained to address their countrymen in the language of Luther, if they wished to be understood ; and this is the more surprising, from the circumstance that, in the south of Germany, where the catholic continued the ruling religion, the Suabian dialect prevailed ;—a dialect, in which so many splendid productions had been composed during the middle ages, and had become dear to the people. But it was not by the

translation of the Bible alone that Luther gave such decisive authority to the High German language, which could hardly have been moulded into a peculiarly national form, by a version from two foreign languages—the Hebrew and the Greek. It was by his numerous sermons, pamphlets, and controversial writings, which overspread all Germany in so short a time, that he strengthened and secured the influence which the translation of the Bible had obtained, not only on the moral and religious, but also on the intellectual and literary, cultivation of the people. Wherever Luther appears as an author, we see in him always the man of the people, bearing the banner of truth. Every word of his, which we read, we find has resulted, not from a calculating mind, or a deeply-laid plan, but from unpremeditated zeal. It is a lightning kindled by the heavenly beams of truth, and works electrically on the simple and artless mind. Luther says, not what he *will*, but what he *must*. His words are impelled by internal necessity. He had been agitated by the throes of spiritual temptation, and through the strife of strong experience had attained to true and fervid piety. From such a man the state of his fellow-men could not remain concealed; and his knowledge of the human heart prompted a style which overturned all barriers of superstition, doubt, and disbelief. He cast “the kindling spark of eternal truth into the soul of man,” and his words, after the lapse of centuries, have now the same effect on him who reads them. From

Luther's glance no recesses of the human heart are concealed. He seeks every where the evil spirit, that lurks within the soul and strives to disturb its peace, and every where he combats it successfully.

It has been urged, as a matter of reproach against Luther, that he was too rude and coarse in argument and invective: and it has been further insinuated, that he is hardly suited to the refinement of our times. He always, indeed, calls vice by its right name. If masked, he lays it bare, and holds it forth in full and undisguised deformity: if it attempts to shrink into concealment, he drags it into light, and chastises it before the world. But is not this the most effectual mode of combating evil, and one which, in itself, proves the true courage and spiritual health of the victorious combatant? It is one among the symptoms of a sickly and nervous age—of an over-refined mind and false cultivation—that the limits of propriety are so described, that many evil propensities may not be attacked, because the fashionable custom forbids the designation of vice by its own detested name. I much doubt if Luther, were he living now, would allow himself to be deterred, by the remonstrances of any German critic, from viewing immorality in its true colours, or from expressing his horror of it: and this is the true spiritual decency, the attribute of heroic souls, which Luther possessed in a higher degree than the fastidious critics of modern times can probably conceive. As a spiritual physician, he cauterized the wound he wished to cure; and to

the endless cavillers for verbal formalities he would exclaim, “ If you think it no shame to *do* that which is indecent, I think it right to reprehend it sharply.” I may further observe, that Luther acted and spoke in the sixteenth century, when immorality had not yet sheltered itself behind a false decorum, and when ladies, who would have shrunk from vice, could hear a pair of breeches named without a shudder. I here repeat—what has been observed in the early part of these lectures—that the *language* of a period is always the mirror of its morals and general character: and as well might we require that the words of Chaucer should be the same with those of Moore, as that Luther’s ideas and views should be measured by the standard of modern refinement. I do not, however, deny that Luther, in his zeal for the good cause, may have said a severe word, more, perhaps, than was absolutely requisite. With his vivacity, fulness of spirit and fancy, and wonderful powers of language, occasional ebullitions must almost necessarily have occurred. Of himself he would have said, *Homo sum, et nihil humani a me alienum esse puto*; for a humbler character has never existed.

The prose of Luther is impressive, profound, seldom florid, and never set off with imagery,—powerful and fiery, but always restrained by reason. He invariably speaks from a full heart, and thus penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul. The great charm of his language may be inferred from his having escaped the common fate of his contemporaries, who are now

perused by the historian and critic, but neglected by the people. Who now reads the works of Zwinglius, Erasmus, Melanchthon, and Calvin? But Luther is still the favourite author among his countrymen. His numerous writings continue to appear, from time to time, in fresh editions, and are eagerly perused by young and old, by high and low. And this, gentlemen, is the proof of the divine spirit in man, that it leaves traces which endure through all eternity.

One of our modern critics has asserted, that Luther was, properly speaking, no poet. If poetry be “a mirror of divine things, the more pure, and at the same time, more various, the more it is unsullied by earthly desires and calculated tendency,” then Luther is a truly great poet, according to this view of poetry, taken by De la Motte Fouqué. I know of no poetical canon which ascribes the bays to him alone who has written an epos or drama, according to the rules of Aristotle. It is true, that with Luther, poetry and the other arts served but as the foil, on which the truly divine sense manifested itself in a more splendid lustre. The tendency of his mental existence was so wholly directed to the glorification of faith, and of life in God, that this seemed to him the sole subject worthy of his muse. Hence his lyrical pieces belong to that class of poetry called *psalms*, of which he is the father and founder. We can boast of no religious poet, who has surpassed him. The first requisites for a religious lyrist are truth and

fidelity,—by which is meant, that profound feeling and piety must be truly and faithfully expressed. But as the feeling of devotion individualizes itself, in various degrees, with various natures, so also must the true expression thereof partake of this variety. Luther's piety was not a soft emotion, expressing itself in gentle tones. He was a strong and powerful spirit, and his piety was always strongly and powerfully expressed. Like Jacob, who wrestled with the angel of the Lord, Luther was ever striving after the highest object; and as, according to the apostle, "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence," he violently bore it away. This labouring spirit, in which humility and strength were wonderfully mingled, is every where expressed in his spiritual songs. Full of divine love and fervour, he denounces the unbeliever, but solaces and cheers the Christian whose spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak. His poetry, like his prose, is more powerful than euphonious, his conceptions more boldly broached than elegantly expressed. He appears to us as a poetical Hercules, having cut for himself a way with unrivalled and resistless force. The psalms of Luther are still unforgotten among his countrymen, and they are thus indestructible, not on account of the reputation of their author, but because they appeal to the pious feeling of mankind, with a voice which will be heard so long as such feeling exists in the human breast. They are for the virtuous of all times, how refined soever, unless the rules of false criticism should overpower

christian piety. Where is the German who could sing that beautiful and energetic psalm, "Ein' veste Burg ist unser Gott," and not feel himself thereby strengthened for the highest efforts against spiritual and temporal oppression? The psalm, with an English version, is here presented to you; \* and it will be perceived that Luther's performance has been rarely equalled for vigour and truly christian courage, whether we consider the spirit, or the irresistible power of its expression.

\* [In order to bring the German original and the English version opposite each other, this Psalm is transferred to the following page.—*Printer's Note.*]

154      INTRODUCTION TO A COURSE OF  
EIN' VESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT.

Ein' veste Burg ist unser Gott,  
Ein' gute Wehr und Waffen ;  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth  
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.  
Der alte böse Feind  
Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint ;  
Gross Macht und viel List  
Sein grausam Rüstzeug ist,  
Auf Erd'n ist nicht Sein's Gleichen.

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär,  
Und wollte uns verschlingen,  
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,  
Es soll uns doch gelingen.  
Der Fürste dieser Welt  
Wie sauer er sich stellt,  
Thut er uns doch nichts ;  
Das macht, er ist gericht't ;  
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts gethan,  
Wir sind gar bald verloren,  
Es streit 't für uns der rechte Mann  
Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.  
Fragst Du wer er ist ?  
Er heisst Jesus Christ,  
Der Herr Zebaoth,  
Und ist kein andrer Gott ;  
Das Feld muss er behalten.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn,  
Und keinen Dank dazu hab'n ;  
Er ist bey uns wohl auf dem Plan,  
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.  
Nehmen sie uns Leib,  
Gut, Ehr, Kind, und Weib,  
Lass fahren dahin,  
Sie haben kein' Gewinn,  
Das Reich Gottes muss uns bleiben.

## A BULWARK IS OUR GOD.

A bulwark is our God, and he  
Our sword and shield is found ;  
From dangers all, he sets us free,  
That now our steps surround.  
The old and evil foe  
Prepares his deadliest blow :  
Great might and matchless guile  
Are his resources vile ;  
Herein, none like him earth can show.

And what though fiends the earth should fill,  
And would our souls devour ?  
This wakes in us no fear of ill :  
We yet shall overpower.  
The prince of this world may  
His direst force display ;  
Yet is he *judged*, and thus  
No terrors hath for us :  
A word can scatter his array.

By our own strength is nothing done,  
And we full soon must fall,  
But that for us God's Chosen One  
Is battling best of all.  
Seek ye to know the same ?  
Christ Jesus is his name,  
The Lord of Sabaoth,  
The true and only God :  
By him victorious must the field be trod.

The word they *shall* allow to stand ;  
For this no thank have they :  
God's blessing and his bounteous hand  
Are with us on our way.  
Then let them take our life,  
Goods, honours, child, and wife :  
Yield them these treasures vain ;  
For nothing is their gain,  
While still to us God's kingdom must remain !

We must now take leave of this splendid genius, and, in so doing, I should wish all such, as may intend to pursue a thorough study of modern German literature, to be assured, that they can commence with no better author than Luther. He stands at the beginning of the sixteenth century, like a beacon shedding its rays on the ocean of German literature, till the time of Lessing, when a bright and cloudless day begins to dawn. In closing my remarks on Luther, I cannot do better than corroborate them by an eminent authority—that of the most distinguished inquirer into the German and Teutonic languages—Jacob Grimm; a man whose indefatigable researches will perhaps be better appreciated by posterity than by the present generation. In the preface to his German Grammar, he says:

“The language of Luther, by reason of its noble and almost miraculous purity, and also on account of its powerful influence, must be considered as the kernel and the foundation of the settlement of the modern High German language; from which, down to the present time, but little deviation, and that little to the detriment of energy and expressiveness, has been made. In fact, the High German may be designated as the protestant dialect, the freedom-breathing nature of which has long since insensibly overpowered the poets and authors of the catholic persuasion.”

He goes on to say:—“Whatever has nourished the spirit and form of language, whatever has re-

vived it, and called forth the flowers of modern poetry, we owe to none more deeply than to Luther."

In the writings of Luther, but few obsolete words occur, and those easy to be understood by the student. I shall particularly recommend the perusal of a collection of choice extracts from his works, by Niethammer, in two volumes, entitled "Weisheit Luthers" (Wisdom of Luther), which was published at Nürnberg in 1817.

THE END.

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Navis vexāta sævis tempestatibus, inter lachrymas vec-  
A-Ship being-harassed by-fierce tempests, amid the-tears of-pas-  
tōrum, et metum mortis, subitō dies mutātur ad serēnam  
sengers, and their fear of-death, suddenly the-day is-changed to a-calm  
faciem; cœpit\* ferri tuta secundis flatibus, que extol-  
aspect; she-began to-be-carried safe with-favourable breezes, and to-  
lere nautas nimiā hilaritāte. Tum Gubernātor,† factus  
elate the-sailors with-too-much jollity. Then the-Pilot, having-been-made  
sophus periclo: “Oportet gaudēre parcè, et queri  
wise by-danger, says: “It-is-meet to-rejoice sparingly, and to-complain  
sensim;‡ quia dolor et gaudium miscet § totam vitam.”  
guardedly; because grief and joy checkers the-whole of life.”

\* This verb is here so long delayed, that we might almost have desired the substantive in the form of an ablative absolute; if the similarity of cases would not have created ambiguity.

† *Gubernator (navis)*, “the governor of a ship,” is expressed by the single word “pilot.”—The predicate *sophus* is a Grecism.

‡ *Sensim*—The use of this adverb is rather singular, though perhaps not so anomalous as it appears from its usual English representative “in-sensibly”; it means here a cautious circumspection, as of a person *feeling his way*.

§ The singular verb is here very elegant, the two substantives constituting but one indivisible subject:—unless it be construed, by *hypallage*, “Life mingles grief and joy.”

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Δε ην πειθη μοι, πρῶτον μεν επι-δειξω σοι πολλα εργα  
But if thou-be-persuaded by-me, first indeed I-will-display to-thee many works  
παλαιῶν ανδρῶν, απο-αγγελουσα και θαυμαστας πρᾶξεις και  
of-ancient men, reporting both admirable actions and  
λογους αυτῶν, και απο-φαινουσα (ώς ειπεῖν) εν-πειρον παντων.  
words of-them, and showing-thee, (so to-say) experienced-in all-things.  
Και την ψυχην, ὁπερ εστι κυριωτατον σοι, κατα-κοσμησω πολ-  
And the soul, which part is most-masterly to-thee, I-will-adorn with-  
λοις και αγαθοις\* κοσμημασι, σω-φροσυνῃ, δικαιοσυνῃ, ευ-σεβειᾳ,  
many and good ornaments, with-temperance, with-justice, with-holiness,  
πρᾳοτητι, επιεικειᾳ, συν-εσει,† καρτεριᾳ, τῷ ερωτι τῶν  
with-gentleness, with-equity, with-prudence, with-fortitude, with-[the] love of-[the]  
καλῶν, τῇ ὀρμῇ προς τα σεμνοτατα. Γαρ ταῦτα  
honorable things, with-[the] zeal towards the most-important things. For these  
εστιν ώς-αληθῶς‡ ὁ α-κηρατος κοσμος τῆς ψυχῆς.  
are most-truly the unblemished adornment of-the soul.

\* The phrase “many and good” is not intended to distinguish the ornaments from one another, as it might seem in English. The expression is only equivalent to “many good ornaments,” and might be rendered with the conjunction,—“many and those good.” The Greeks employ the particle between any two epithets.

† *Συνεισις* (from *συνειναι*, to comprehend) may here be translated by the general term *Prudence*, though in strict Aristotelian language, this term is rather synonymous with “penetration,” or “intelligence.”—All compound words are dissolved above.

‡ ώς αληθῶς—here corresponds to the Latin form *quam verissime*, “as truly as possible;” but Greek adverbs, as well as Latin, are generally used in the superlative, to convey this sense.

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Bě-rēashīth' bārā'a aělōhīm' aěth ha'-shāma'yim  
(1) In-the-beginning   <sup>2</sup>created   <sup>1</sup>God   —   the-heavens  
wě-aěth hā-aāretz. wě-hā-aāretz hāyěthāh' thō'hū wā-vō'hū  
and   —   the-earth. (2) And-the-earth was without-form and-void,  
wě-'hōshe'k oal..pěnēi thěhōwm wě-rūa'h aělōhīm'  
and-darkness was upon..the-face-of the-deep; and-the-Spirit-of God  
měra'he'pheth oal..pěnēi ha'-māyim. wa'-yō'amer aělōhīm'  
was brooding upon..the-face-of the-waters. (3) And-said   <sup>1</sup>God :  
yěhī\* aōwr wa-yěhī..aōwr'. wa'-yar'a aělōhīm' aeth..  
*Let-there-be* light: and-there-was-light. (4) And-<sup>2</sup>saw   <sup>1</sup>God   —  
hā-aōwr' kī..tōwv': wa'-yavdēl' aělōhīm' bēin hā-aōwr'  
the-light that-it-was..good: and-<sup>2</sup>divided   <sup>1</sup>God between the-light  
ū-vēin' ha-'hōshe'k. wa'-yiqrā'a aělōhīm' lā-aōwr' yōwm  
and-between the-darkness. (5) And-<sup>2</sup>called   <sup>1</sup>God [to-]the-light day,  
wě-la-'hōshe'k qa'rāa lā'yělāh. wa-yěhī..oérev wa-yěhī..  
and-[to-] the-darkness he-called night. And-<sup>2</sup>was..evening and-<sup>2</sup>was..  
vō'quer yōwm ae'hād.  
'morning   <sup>2</sup>day   <sup>1</sup>the-first.

*English Version.* Verse 1, heaven. 2, the Spirit of God moved.

\* This word, and others of the same form, rendered imperatively, are properly futures—*shall* or *will be*, or impersonally, *there shall be*, &c.

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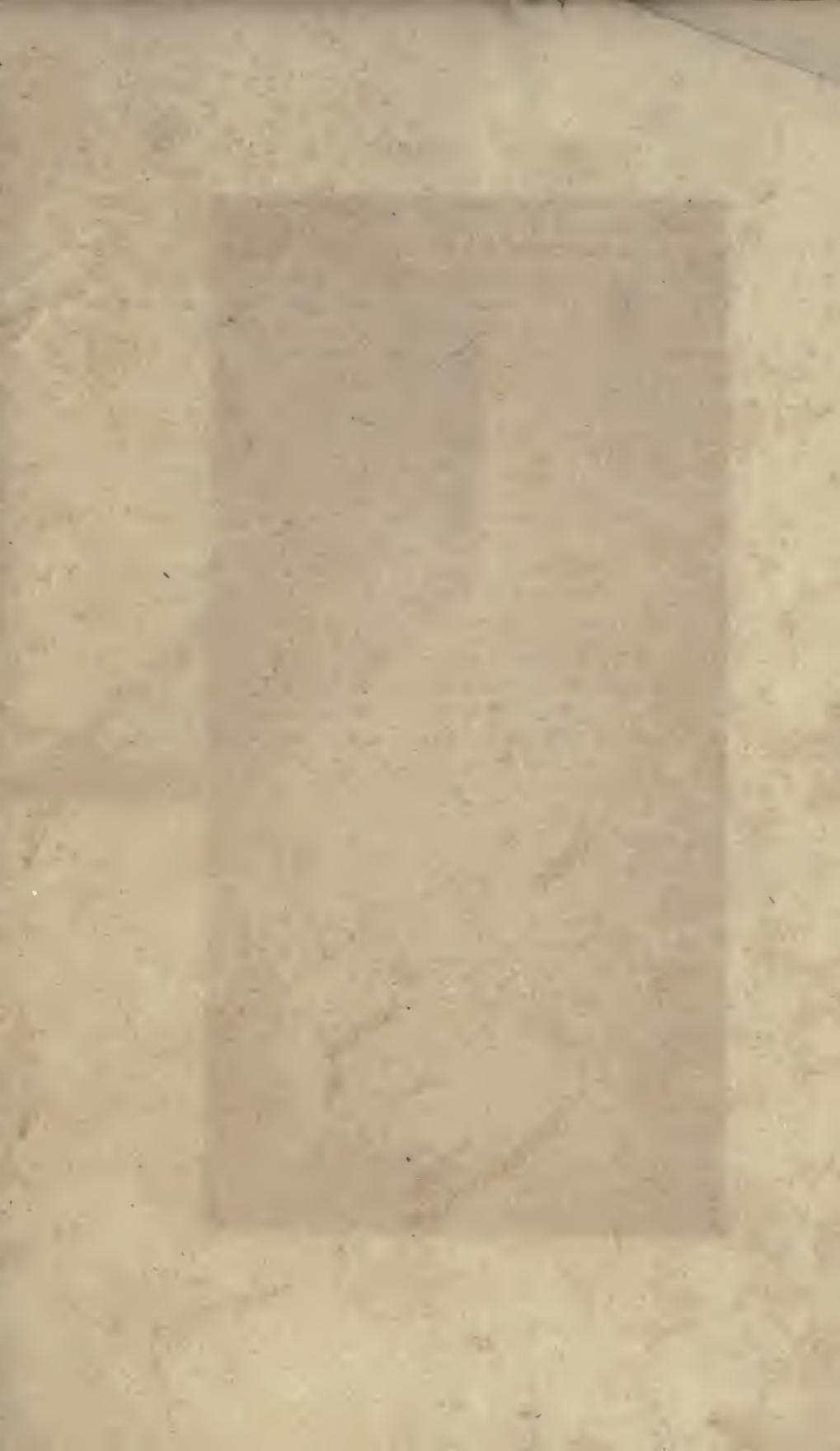
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